

# Making Connections: Conceptions of Teaching and Learning in Secondary Teacher Education

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education at the University of Canterbury

by Jane Robertson

University of Canterbury  
1997

## CONTENTS

List of figures and tables .....	iv
Abstract .....	v
Acknowledgements .....	vi
 Chapter One - Introduction and review of literature .....	 1
 Chapter Two - Research Methodology .....	 7
*Phenomenography as research methodology .....	7
*Secondary teacher training at the College of Education .....	8
*Selection of participants .....	9
*Position of the researcher .....	10
*Data collection .....	11
*Constraints and concerns .....	13
 Chapter Three - Student profiles .....	 14
*Presentation of data .....	14
*The students and their views .....	14
*Evan .....	15
*Fiona .....	20
*Colin .....	27
*Andrea .....	33
*Brian .....	40
*Gayle .....	45
*Diane .....	51
 Chapter Four - Research Findings .....	 57
*Conceptions of learning .....	58
*Conceptions of teaching .....	64
*Relationship between teaching and learning .....	73

Chapter Five - Discussion of the findings .....	75
Chapter Six - Recommendations and conclusion .....	84
Appendices .....	91
*Appendix A: Data Collection Overview .....	91
*Appendix B: Student Interview Questions .....	92
*Appendix C: Mid-Year Questionnaire .....	93
References .....	94

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Table 1: Classifications of conceptions of teaching .....	64
Figure 1: Conceptions of teaching .....	67



## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the conceptions of teaching and learning held by a small group of students completing a one year course in secondary teacher education at the Christchurch College of Education. Seven students were interviewed, observed and surveyed over a period of eight months, to track the development in their conceptions and the factors impacting on this development. The phenomenographic interview formed the primary means of data collection. Conceptions emerging from the data were categorised in terms of their fundamental differences.

Findings are presented in two parts. Firstly a profile of each student is constructed from the data gathered; each profile concludes with a brief authorial comment. Secondly, conceptions of teaching and learning are categorised and compared with existing categories of conceptions. While the students' conceptions of learning are found to correspond closely to existing categories, different categories of conceptions of teaching have been identified. A model of conceptions of teaching is presented in which the categories are considered to be complementary rather than hierarchical.

This thesis suggests that there is a close link between students' conceptions of learning and their approaches to teaching; that prior educational experiences, especially the influence of significant teachers, has a strong and lasting impact on students' ideas about teaching and learning; that these ideas undergo modification rather than substantial change as a result of pre-service teacher education; that time constraints and the teaching approaches of some associate teachers in schools may encourage students to adopt teaching methods which encourage surface approaches to learning in their pupils; and that effective teaching should draw on all three categories of conceptions of teaching presented in the model.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to a number of people involved directly or indirectly in this project. To the Research Committee of the Christchurch College of Education whose funding made the research possible; to the seven students who gave their time freely and participated so positively; to Roderick McKay, my supervisor, who introduced me to this whole area of research and who knew when to intervene and when to let me go for it; to my Secondary Programme colleagues whose professionalism and enthusiasm for teacher education will ensure the ongoing vitality of the programme; to Kay Smythe who did such a superb job of transcribing the interviews; and to my mother, Rhondda, who, more than anyone, saw the toll extracted and kept me sane.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Every student engaged in a course of pre-service secondary teacher education, regardless of age, gender or nationality, has experienced Lortie's (1975, p.65) "apprenticeship of observation". These students have generally had sixteen or more years of formal education and an intimate exposure to the processes of teaching and learning. However, "what students learn about teaching then (as pupils) is intuitive and imitative rather than explicit and analytical; it is based on individual personalities rather than pedagogical principles". One of the roles of teacher education must be to develop an awareness of the principles underpinning effective teaching and learning so that good practice is based on informed understanding and not merely uninformed imitation.

Research, however, suggests that the impact of pre-service teacher education is slight. Richardson (1996, p.113) asserts that "except for the student-teaching element, pre service teacher education seems a weak intervention. It is sandwiched between two powerful forces - previous life history, particularly that related to being a student, and classroom experience as a student teacher and teacher". She adds; "perceived changes in pre-service students' beliefs and conceptions may be transitory or artificial and turn out not to drive their actions when they become teachers". If this is in fact the case, then it is time to seriously reconsider current approaches to teacher education in general and

pre-service in particular.

As someone involved in secondary teacher education for the last six and a half years, I have become increasingly interested in the ideas students bring with them as they enter a course of teacher training. This study aims therefore to investigate the conceptions of teaching and learning held by a group of secondary student teachers on their entry to the Christchurch College of Education, the extent to which those views are modified during the course of the year and why.

The last two decades have generated considerable research activity focused on conceptions of teaching and learning in higher education. Pioneering research carried out by Saljo (1979) into students' conceptions of learning has been followed up by Eizenberg (1986), Biggs (1991) and Marton, Dall'Alba and Beaty (1993) while other researchers, including Martin and Balla (1991), Pratt (1992), Samuelowicz and Bain (1992) and Gow and Kember (1993), have investigated conceptions of teaching and their impact on student learning. Recent investigation by Trigwell and Prosser (1996) has focussed particularly on how university teachers conceive of the relationship between teaching and learning. Much of this research has been based on a phenomenographical approach which aims, through interview, to identify students' conceptions of learning and/or teaching and then categorise them according to their fundamental differences. To date the research findings have identified remarkably consistent categories of conceptions held by students and teachers in higher education. It is from this body of literature that my research methodology is drawn; I will also seek to compare the categories of conceptions of teaching and

learning identified in this literature with the categories emerging from this research project.

The second body of literature on which this project draws involves research into the conceptions of teaching and learning held by early childhood, primary and secondary student teachers. This research has, in general, used a survey or case study approach rather than a phenomenographical approach. Findings increasingly stress the significance of prior experience in the student teacher's conceptions of teaching and learning and recommend strongly the need for teacher education programmes to acknowledge and make these conceptions explicit.

The tendency of teacher educators has been to "ignore the novice's prior knowledge about teaching and instead approach the task of teacher socialisation and development as though the beginner were a *tabula rasa*" (Bullough, 1991). Carter (1990, p.291) points out that "for the most part, attention in teacher education has traditionally been focussed on what teachers need to know and how they can be trained, rather than on what they actually know or how that knowledge is acquired".

There is now a significant body of research which confirms the durability of pre-existing beliefs and prior experiences and which suggests that teacher education programmes have very little impact on the conceptions of teaching and learning held by student teachers. Work done by Tabachnick and Zeichner (1984) indicates that the conceptions held by student teachers were not significantly altered by their training experience; "the dominant trend was for

teaching perspectives to develop and grow in a direction consistent with the 'latent' culture that students brought to the experience". Goodman (1988) concludes that "early childhood and school experiences had a significant impact on the informants' professional perspectives ...". Students' "pre-professional images formed an 'intuitive screen' through which they interpreted their professional education" and "most students tended to be influenced by those people or experiences that legitimated their existing 'intuitive screen'". Bullough and Knowles (1991) talk about the need to make explicit the metaphors and images which form the "lenses through which teacher education and teaching are made either appropriately or inappropriately meaningful" while Bullough (1991) concludes that "functioning as a teaching schema, prior knowledge about teaching serves as a filter through which the student responds to teacher education. Content and experiences that tend to confirm the schema are accepted, whereas those that do not are rejected". Kagan (1992) believes that "pre-existing beliefs/images and prior experiences play a central role in filtering the content of education course work". What, if anything, tends to be taken from university courses according to Knowles (1992) were "those viewpoints and orientations to practice in the classroom that were congruent with previously held images of teachers' work and that provided reinforcement and validation of their positions". Goodman (1988) has also indicated that "although most students had formed some images of education and teaching prior to enrolling ... their notions had not been organised into a well defended theory of teaching ... at any given time during their professional preparation, these students expressed vague and often contradictory views on various aspects of teaching and learning".

Research has also identified certain patterns of change in the thinking of student teachers. In a report of the first year of a longitudinal study to investigate changes in pre-service teachers' knowledge and beliefs about reading instruction, Hollingsworth (1989) discovered that "out of the fourteen subjects, thirteen came into the programme with the belief that management was synonymous with relating equally to their classroom pupils ... there appeared to be a definite pattern in realising that such beliefs were not conducive to teaching. First teachers expressed an awareness that endorsing a loose or unstructured classroom environment was not working. There was a shift to try and overcome that problem by becoming too firm and inflexible. That second stage was characterized by a frustration while attempting to model the co-operating teacher's managerial style without regard to students' individual needs and reactions". Goodman (1988) found that students tended to organise their philosophy of teaching around two broad categories - teaching as a problem of control and teaching as the facilitation of children's growth. In both these cases students placed an initial emphasis on the affective rather than the cognitive or managerial domain. Lortie (1975, p.63) states that "there is ample indication of affective responses of liking and disliking, identifying with or rejecting, but there seems relatively little basis for assuming that students make cognitive differentiations and thoughtful assessments of the quality of teaching performances".

The research cited stresses the importance of acknowledging and making explicit student teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning as a key component of a teacher education programme. Bullough and Knowles (1991) feel that "beginning teachers could be assisted significantly in their

development if teacher educators and those also in charge of mentor programs, could direct energy toward helping the beginning teacher to make explicit, carefully analyse and thoroughly explore and critique, the metaphors and images they bring to teaching ... ". Pintrich (1990, p.829) maintains that "teacher education courses and programmes should attempt to facilitate the adoption of a deep processing orientation to learning by students. The surface-deep conceptualisation would suggest that student teachers who adopt a deep processing approach to course work in pedagogy would be more likely to change their conceptions of teaching and learning than student teachers who adopt a surface orientation". Hollingsworth concludes that "what seems to be needed in teacher education is a flexible approach that will help candidates with different incoming beliefs understand the complexities involved in classroom life ... ".

This research project aims therefore to investigate the following questions:

1. What are the conceptions of teaching and learning held by secondary teacher trainees on their entry to the Christchurch College of Education?
2. To what extent are these views modified during the course of the training year and why?



## CHAPTER TWO

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### **Phenomenography as research methodology**

The term phenomenography was first used by Ference Marton in 1981 in reference to research carried out in Sweden in the 1970's. Phenomenography is, therefore, a recent research tradition which has been developed mainly within the discipline of education (Svensson, 1994). The aim of phenomenography is to describe people's conceptions of the world about them and to categorise these conceptions in terms of their fundamental differences. This research approach assumes that, at any particular point in time, the conceptions held by an individual define that person's understanding of reality and determine his/her response within a particular social and cultural context. The only world we can explore is the world in the mind of the beholder (Dahlgren, 1995). The role of the researcher is to set aside his or her own preconceptions and to reflect as accurately as possible the reality of the individual. A knowledge of where people are at in their understanding of a particular phenomenon is essential to the core business of education which is the support of meaningful change.

Understanding student teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning (and making those conceptions explicit for the students) would seem to be a fundamental starting point for any teacher education programme.

Phenomenography therefore offers a method of 'mapping' these conceptions, of bringing to the surface ideas and understandings that students themselves may not be fully conscious of. Conceptions may be expressed in different forms of action but they are most accessible through language. This research project therefore uses the phenomenographic interview as the primary means of data collection with some additional participant observation.

### **Secondary teacher training at the Christchurch College of Education**

The Secondary Programme of the Christchurch College of Education offers a number of routes to students involved in pre-service teacher education. Students involved in this research project were all enrolled in the Division C, one year postgraduate course which ran from January to November of 1996. Participants were all students for whom History/Social Studies was a main teaching study area.

The Division C course involves students spending four blocks of approximately five weeks each in college-based courses interspersed with three teaching practice sections of 4/5 weeks duration. The college-based course includes:

**Professional Studies;** a compulsory course which covers modules relating to the secondary school student, presentation skills, basic lesson planning, classroom management, stress management, questioning, learning theories and teaching models, equity issues, individual learning needs and assessment.  
**Teaching Studies;** courses which focus on the curriculum statements,

examination prescriptions, unit standards, philosophy, teaching and management approaches, assessment practices and resources relevant to particular curriculum areas. Students must choose at least one subject as their major teaching study as well as courses in a second curriculum area or in an extension area to their major teaching study.

**Education Studies;** courses are designed to complement and broaden theoretical concepts related to teaching and learning that have been introduced to students in their Professional Studies course.

**Maori Study;** this course provides an opportunity for students to extend their skills and knowledge of basic te reo and tikanga maori in the context of their role as a secondary school teacher and includes an overnight stay on a marae.

**Selected Studies;** enable students to increase their specialisation in a particular area or to broaden their knowledge and expertise.

The **teaching practice** component allows the student teacher to develop skills and gain experience in practical situations with professional support from school associates and college lecturers. Students are encouraged, wherever possible, to experience a range of schools including state/private, co-educational/single sex, urban/rural. One, and possibly two, teaching practice sections may be done out of Christchurch.

### **Selection of participants**

In February of 1996 a general invitation was issued to the thirty students in the History/Social Studies main teaching subject course to become involved in a

year long research project focussing on their conceptions of teaching and learning. The nature, duration and anticipated time commitment for the participants was outlined at this point. From the students who signalled interest in participating, seven were selected. The criteria for selection were designed to ensure a relatively homogeneous group with an approximate gender balance. (Whether the students would complete their first teaching practice in Christchurch or beyond was also a determining factor as only students based in Christchurch and surrounds could be observed. Some volunteers therefore had to be declined on this basis). These students signed a consent form indicating that they understood the nature and purpose of the research; in doing so their right to withdraw from the project at any stage or to withdraw information was acknowledged and the preservation of their anonymity was assured.

### **Position of the researcher**

At the time this research was being conducted, I held the position of lecturer in Professional Studies, History and Social Studies in the Secondary Programme at the Christchurch College of Education and was co-ordinator of the Social Science Curriculum Centre. The students in the research project were drawn from my History/Social Studies Main Teaching Subject course, a ten unit course which ran through all four in-college blocks. One student was also a member of my Professional Studies tutor group and another was a member of the Professional Studies syndicate with which I was associated. My role with regard to all these students included assessment of their course work and, in

the case of the student in my Professional Studies tutor group, the writing of an end of year College profile.

### **Data Collection**

The nature and timing of data collection was determined to a very considerable extent by the structure of the students' college year. Traditionally, Division C students spend four blocks of approximately five weeks each in college-based courses interspersed with three teaching practice sections of 4/5 weeks duration. The relationship between course structure and data collection is outlined in Appendix A.

The first data collection point in late February involved semi-structured, taped interviews of approximately thirty minutes in length with each participant. These interviews occurred approximately 3-4 weeks into the first in-college teaching block and just prior to the students going out on their first four week teaching practice. Questions focused on what the students thought learning was and how they went about it; what they thought teaching was and how a teacher helped them learn and, finally, asked them to describe the sort of teacher they wanted to be and how they believed they would achieve this (see Appendix B). In keeping with the tradition of phenomenography, initial questions were broad and every effort was made to minimise the impact of the interviewer on the interviewee.

The second data collection point involved an observation of each student teaching a class during his/her first teaching practice section. Following the

observation students were encouraged to reflect on the lesson in light of their aims, objectives and expectations. Brief field notes were recorded during observation and reflection.

Originally the third data collection point was to occur in August, after the completion of the students' second teaching practice section and prior to their September vacation. I was concerned, however, that the period of time without research project related contact with the students would be too long and so distributed a questionnaire in June which asked them to comment further on their understanding of teaching and learning, the contribution of college courses and first teaching practice experience to this understanding and how, in the light of any new understandings, they might modify their teaching approach during section two. Students were also asked to describe again the sort of teacher they wanted to be and to identify any factors which had influenced this decision (see Appendix C).

The fourth data collection point therefore occurred, as planned, in mid to late August and involved another round of semi-structured, taped interviews, ranging from thirty to forty-five minutes in length. Because the students had recently returned from their second teaching practice, the interviews focused to a large extent on the nature of their experience, what they had learned about themselves as teachers and about their students as learners, the impact of associate teachers on their practice and whether or not they felt their ideas about teaching and learning had changed in any way. They were also asked to describe their understanding of the relationship between teaching and learning (see Appendix C).

## Constraints and concerns

There were factors which potentially constrained and limited the data collection. Because many of the students were posted out of Christchurch for their second and third teaching practice sections it was not possible to carry out any observation on other than the first teaching practice. In the event, I felt that the single observation was of very limited value, occurring as it did so early in the students' teaching experience. Interviews and observations were squeezed into full programmes for both students and researcher. My relationship to the students, as one of their main teaching subject tutors, was a concern to me. I worried that they might feel constrained by the knowledge that I had an assessment role to play in their development through the year and made every effort to separate my role as researcher from my role as teacher. However their willingness to be involved in the project and the openness and honesty with which they approached all the data collection, suggests that this was a constraint in my mind rather than theirs and that they, in fact, perceived participation to be of positive benefit.

Of greater concern is the inability of the researcher to approach such a task objectively. Webb (1996) questions "the ability of the researcher to have pristine perception, make neutral observations, build objective categories and give neutral interpretations: each of these activities is informed by theory and prejudice". This I acknowledge. I can only argue, in support of this particular piece of research, that I am aware of such bias and that I have endeavoured to present data in such a way as to enable the reader to draw her/his own conclusions.

## CHAPTER THREE

### STUDENT PROFILES

#### **Presentation of data**

Both at the initial research design stage and, more clearly, following the completion of data collection, it became apparent that there were at least two ways in which the data could be analysed and presented. One was to track each individual student through the course of the year, identifying the key conceptions for that person and exploring the source of any impact on those conceptions. The second approach was to depersonalise the data and, through close analysis and a process of successive abstraction, to establish categories of conceptions held by this cohort of students. It seemed to me that both approaches were valid and that one could well inform the other. I have, therefore, chosen to begin by presenting the data for each individual student.

#### **The students and their views**

It is my intention, in this section, to try and reveal or make explicit, the conceptions of teaching and learning held by each participant in the research project. I want the students to speak for themselves so that the reader can gain a profile of each individual. To this end I have quoted extensively from the interviews and deliberately refrained from commenting on or analysing the



data until each profile is complete. Words and phrases which capture the essence of each student's conceptions have been highlighted. Students' names have been changed and specific details which might reveal identity, avoided.

As indicated earlier, the group was relatively homogeneous. It comprised four women and three men all of European descent and all of whom were majoring in Social Studies and History. Each student was also taking courses in one or more of the following: Art History, Classical Studies, English, Geography, Maths and Home Economics. Most of the students had gone directly from high school to university and then to the College of Education. One had taken a year off to work and travel before returning to complete an honours degree. One student, older than the others, was making a career change involving a return to full-time study after a considerable period of time in the work force.

### **Evan**

Evan completed his secondary education at a single sex, state school before studying history, classical studies and geography at university.

In his first interview, Evan described learning as a process of **"being influenced"** by someone or something. It involved the transmission of culture and values and was important for life, not just in an academic context. Learning tended to be described from the perspective of the teacher rather than that of the learner. Teaching involved **"influencing students"** but not just presenting them with one opinion; "I think you've got to introduce them to lots of opinions, basically just to get them thinking for themselves so they are

able to ... work out things for themselves ... you've got to look at a lot of things and clarify what it means for you personally". This was very much the process Evan described using in his own learning; he would expose himself to many different opinions and aspects of a topic and then attempt to synthesise them, to "align them so they all mean one thing".

Evan was very clear about the lifelong impact of teaching and learning.

You've got to give them a certain amount (of information) but they've also got to be able to find their own information and I think that it prepares them for university, when you have to find your own information, and also in the workplace, in their careers they are going to have to do things for themselves and are going to have to think for themselves and I think that's what schools are for.

In this he had clearly been influenced by a teacher at high school who had "done a lot of different things" and who "provided a good balance in the fact that he realised that his teaching and learning wasn't the be all and end all of being at school ...". Evan also referred to a second teacher who had "stuck pretty much to an episodic structure ... and gave us examples on the board and showed us how to do them with our textbooks and then we did them ... **you got the job done and you learnt**".

When asked to describe the sort of teacher he wanted to be Evan responded in terms of what he perceived to be the difference in relationship that could be

established with junior and with senior classes. He felt that a teacher could probably be more relaxed and "personal" with senior classes and that they could learn a lot from each other; "they want to be there so they are going to learn". Junior classes were going to require more management. To ensure that learning occurred in his classes Evan thought he would need to set objectives and keep measuring the students' progress against these objectives.

Evan was pleased with the lesson I observed during his first teaching practice at a single sex boys' school, feeling that it went pretty much the way he wanted it to. The lesson had used handout material and questions for the students to work through interspersed with whole class discussion led by the teacher. Towards the end of the period an extended questioning sequence drew concepts and key ideas relating to the theme of the lesson from the students. The lesson was carefully structured and controlled.

Evan felt that the students had "**clicked onto**" the main ideas of the lesson. Prior to section he had anticipated that students might generate their own questions but now he felt that the teacher had to lead the questioning in order to get the students where they should be. The teacher could throw in some "curly ones" to stimulate students to think for themselves. He concluded that it was better to start out in a fairly structured and traditional way and then experiment from there.

In the questionnaire prior to second section, Evan identified co-operative learning as being something he had learnt about in College which he believed would have a real impact on his ideas about teaching and learning. He wanted

to generate a friendly atmosphere in which ideas would be acknowledged and shared. From his first section he identified the need to give lessons more structure through the use of graphic organisers. He wanted to be a “friendly yet firm” teacher who would make use of questioning to seek student opinions and ideas.

In his second interview Evan described his second section school as being quite different from his first; students liked to know why they were doing something and would challenge the teacher on this basis. He felt the students responded quite well to his teaching though “I was a little disappointed with my teaching strategies, I should have used more group work and things like that ...”. He went on to say:

I had some restraints placed on me by my associates, **they wanted the stuff taught with certain ways of teaching it**, so that was a restraint, but I tried to introduce topics and themes and tried to get them to make their own notes or why do they come to these conclusions, or why do they reach this outcome and things like that. But more and more I find you have to accept the very strict guidelines and what they should be reading because some students can go off on a tangent and read other parts of the book and that sort of thing so I felt you had to set them guidelines that they had to keep within, to find out what they wanted to know and what I wanted them to know... the history associate, especially with the seventh form, she just wanted them to get the notes down and get all the content done - we were going to do some

**creative stuff** the last couple of days on section but things interrupted this.

Clearly at this point there was a tension being generated for Evan between the way he had envisaged himself teaching, the way his associates expected him to teach, the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the students. He was also finding out more about how students learn. "I'm not sure they learn so much in class. I think they get down what they have to learn in class and they learn it either in their own way at home or when they study for their Bursary exams or whatever. **How much learning goes on in class, well the way I taught on section, is limited**".

I asked Evan whether his ideas about teaching and learning had changed since the beginning of the year. He felt they had not so much changed as been "modified" to suit as a result of experience. When asked for one word to describe what a teacher does he responded; "what a teacher is - I don't know, it's not a facilitator I don't think. **An injector?**". I asked him to expand. "Well, **inject knowledge into the kids and you're supposedly a never ending supply**". He also reflected on the importance of having a good rapport with the students; "I think if they don't like you they're not going to learn because they don't want to".

Evan's conceptions of teaching and learning had certainly undergone some modification in the seven months of data collection. Of the teacher role models he mentioned, one had impressed for his holistic approach to the purpose of education and the other for his carefully structured, tightly

controlled lessons. Evan's initial interview emphasised the process of teaching as 'influencing' and the process of learning as 'being influenced'; he saw the teacher exposing students to a range of ideas and opinions from which they would make judgements and decisions. By the time of his first teaching practice Evan had decided that the teacher had to play a greater role in the structuring of student learning; the lesson observed followed a traditional, episodic pattern but also endeavoured to engage students in discussion and analysis. Evan then went into his second teaching practice with some clearly articulated goals based on his first teaching experience and new ideas acquired at college. There seems to have been a substantive change at this point, best summed up by the new metaphor of teacher as 'injector' of information. Evan was conscious of this change and expressed some disappointment about it but justified his position by reference to the demands of associates, the pressures of the curriculum and the perceived reality of the classroom. He made a clear distinction between getting through the content and doing 'creative stuff', the implication being that the second was an optional extra. It is significant that he saw the students as responding well to his teaching despite his perception that they were probably not learning very much in class.

### **Fiona**

Fiona attended a number of primary and intermediate schools and then a secondary girls' college followed by a co-educational school for her senior years. Her final two years of school were memorable. "I had really good teachers in the sixth and seventh form who really had a huge impact on me. Luckily one was my form teacher and she was really cool and a lot of my impressions of

teaching and school come from the two teachers that I had". When I pressed Fiona to explain what it was these teachers did she responded; "I think a lot of it's their presentation - the teachers themselves - for me it was. Just like they had a **presence**, they knew who they were, they knew themselves. They were friendly. To me it was just the way they were, like I always wanted to be like them".

University was a different matter. "It was different. I found it really hard. I couldn't find all the things that they wanted me to find. I like things generally, I'm more of a general knowledge person rather than find out everything about one single event and hash it - that's not me". Fiona struggled with low grades initially despite a lot of hard work.

I did Geology in my first year - I really liked it, I liked dinosaurs and rocks and the solar system, it's just I failed it - I just failed it. I got this huge 'E' and I was thinking 'how did this happen?'. I went to every class and I went to the labs and sat there for three hours on a Friday afternoon looking at rocks. I went all the time and did the field trip but I just failed it. I don't know why, it was just something that just didn't come.

So for Fiona, learning is "when you know more, you take on all this information ... it's just an **acquisition of knowledge** that you choose to use or choose not to use". Active processing helps understanding and retention as does a real interest in what she is learning. In regard to Classical Studies:

I like to see what people write because in some ways there is only so much that people can write because there is only so much that we know and that's something I like about it too ... I prefer having **hard knowledge** rather than knowledge that's somewhere else out there and you have to think about it ... I'm more of a facts person, not an abstract thinker.

So teaching is "the process of trying to get them to learn something, trying to get them to understand the concept - not necessarily your view but just concepts and ideas, processes, formats, skills. Teaching is a huge responsibility because basically that person in front of you - their mind is open and whatever you say is **filling it** and you've got to fill it right otherwise you don't know where you're going".

In describing the sort of teacher she would like to be and how she would like to operate, Fiona said the following:

I would like to be respected but that's something that you earn. I would like to be strict or more formal but yet be informal and relaxed - approachable. To know that **there's a line**, what I will accept and what I won't accept. To make it fun, to be interesting, to be of a relaxed nature not a serious nature and to be enthusiastic and to make them enthusiastic too ... What I've dealt with too is me as a person who likes to be liked and that's something you're struggling with too. You can't always be liked.



The lesson I was to observe Fiona teach during her first teaching practice was disrupted by a sports event and was therefore a non starter. However, in the questionnaire she filled out in June Fiona identified that the most important thing a teacher did was to **“facilitate learning - teach skills and encourage enthusiasm for learning”**. She also stated that, as a result of college courses **“I’ve learnt to reduce my role as a teacher to that of a co-learner with the students - not to be so dictatorish”**. Her views about the sort of teacher she wanted to be remained consistent even though **“I learnt heaps from my first section”**.

During her second teaching practice Fiona was without her main associate for most of the section and therefore took on board considerably more responsibility than would otherwise have been the case.

It showed me a lot about what I could do and what it is really like teaching as much as what I did and having to deal with a lot of things like, ‘am I doing the right thing?’ and having to know that I am without anyone else helping me. I think that’s the hardest thing because **when you really do teach no-one is there to tell you whether you’re doing the right thing or not really.**

I asked Fiona whether her ideas about the sort of teacher she wanted to be had changed at all as a result of her second teaching practice.

It’s kind of changed a wee bit - how much I’m not too sure until I think about it, but I don’t think I was naive about a lot of things,

about like let's be friends and all be happy - that's the big realisation. You sort of think no you can't be their friends but really you can't, you just can't afford to do it when you have to mark things and stuff - I found that quite difficult trying to remain abstract from it ... you've got to be tough on them, firm but fair ... just because you're an adult doesn't mean that you've got any sort of control.

Probably management wise to be a lot tougher - not to let them get so personal as well, like I struck that with a few seventh formers - like 'where do you live, what do you do after school, do you have parties?' **Because I still feel like them.**

I asked Fiona about the influence of her associate teachers. One in particular had impressed with "her mellowness, her enthusiasm but yet her firmness when it came to the crunch and her ability to say little things that got the work done - not like 'why are you late?' but like 'did your dog prevent you from leaving the house this morning?' Just as with her own teachers, what Fiona appreciated in her associates and wished to emulate, was a way of operating and communicating rather than actual teaching strategies.

At this point the discussion returned to the question of relationships and Fiona went on to further tease out the nature of the boundaries between student and teacher.

You've got to be approachable, you've got to be able to relate to

them and have an understanding ... I think you've got to break the boundaries between teachers and students. So many students don't believe you have a social life or don't believe you are a real person ... **it's kind of a fine line.**

I asked Fiona about how students were learning in her classes. She made the comment that "they all seemed to suck back all of it really" and described how she helped students remember material by giving key historical figures nicknames. Learning needed to be relevant and fun; students needed to be 'open' to it. She went on; "I mean I can stand at the front and have all this knowledge but unless I can get it out in a way the kids can take it in, then no learning's going to take place". I asked Fiona who was responsible for the learning. "They are, but then I have to make it learnable, right? So, **they're responsible for their learning, and that's the hardest thing I learnt too**".

Several times during the second interview Fiona returned to the theme of responsibility. "I mean **you're responsible for these kids learning this stuff**, you've got a lot to do and if they don't know it then it falls back on you doesn't it? And later; "but I felt such responsibility for them, at senior level, to make sure they were learning but all I can do is give them stuff and then they have to decide."

Fiona saw the college component of the course as being too divorced from the reality of the classroom. It was neither sufficiently practical nor sufficiently black and white. Spending ten weeks at a stretch in college meant that the chance to practice was lost; "it needs to be more out there".

Fiona began her college year with some definite ideas about teaching and learning based on her own school and university experiences. She was very clear about the sort of learner she was; a 'facts' person who enjoyed the process of accumulating knowledge. She freely acknowledged her own academic limitations but gave herself credit for her considerable achievements. For Fiona to learn, the material had to be interesting and the process fun. Teachers to whom Fiona could relate, who provided strong role models and who stimulated interest in the subject, played a crucial role in her learning.

Fiona's initial conceptions of teaching were clearly linked not only to influential teachers but also to her own ways of learning. She saw the teacher as being responsible for motivating students and filling up their minds with the right material. In this respect she is a classic example of Martin and Balla's (1991) category of 'teaching as presenting information'. Fiona's learning orientation is external (just tell me what I should do) (Korthagen, 1988). As early as the first interview the concept of teacher responsibility featured prominently in Fiona's responses. Following two teaching sections and three blocks in college, Fiona was still adamant about the huge responsibility involved in teaching but she had shifted tentatively towards a recognition that the responsibility for learning was a shared one. She was prepared to use a variety of teaching strategies to facilitate learning but expressed frustration at the comparative apathy of many students and their willingness to be force fed. At the very time she was recognising that teaching and learning is a two way process she was discovering that many students preferred to abdicate their part of the process!

Another major concern for Fiona was establishing a clear role for herself as teacher in her relationship with students. She saw a positive affective relationship as being the key to effective teaching and learning but struggled to find the right balance of intimacy and distance, the location of the 'fine line'. Fiona's interview transcripts reflect the battle that is being played out in this respect; there are many contradictions but they are evidence of the process of trying to reconcile the virtually irreconcilable!

A close analysis of the data relating to Fiona does not suggest any substantial movement in terms of her conceptions of teaching and learning. Initial ideas are refined and become more sophisticated but the essence of her conceptions is, I believe, reflected in the two high school teachers whose impact was so great. The qualities she particularly admires in associates are also ones that reinforce this conception.

### **Colin**

Colin attended a co-educational secondary school in the north island followed by four years at Otago University majoring in history and psychology. He described his own secondary school as being "a really good school. It was pretty liberal and forward thinking - I wouldn't mind teaching in the same sort of school as that".

Learning for Colin was "any observable change in your behaviour ... **modifying your behaviour**". His concept of learning encompassed both academic and

'social' learning - "like I'm always conscious of learning in a social situation as well". He described one of his major interests as being "the influence of other people's behaviours on your own". He saw learning as being "**a real on-going thing**; you never stop learning and in a lot of ways you never stop teaching as well because it's such a social world that quite often people are influenced by other people".

When asked to describe what a teacher does Colin used the word 'educator' and then went on to qualify the term with:

there's also got to be a humanist side to them as well and for that reason it's real important to have inter-personal skills as well. They've got to be **humanist, mentors** I think. I think my best teachers at high school, particularly at fifth, sixth and seventh form - I actually got on really well with them and could almost say they were friends, like they were just **really good people ...**"

Prior to section one Colin described the sort of teacher he wanted to be.

I definitely want to be - I'm a pretty liberal sort of person - I want to be a **liberal sort of teacher**... I'm going to have very few rules in my class, just basic ones like consideration for others when they are speaking ... I'm going to be pretty open minded in terms of discussions and things like that because I think what kids learn off each other is also pretty awesome ... I'm also going to make sure they know I'm a human by talking about things like what they did

at the weekend ... playing sport with them during lunchtime - things like that just to show that I do normal things as well.

Colin completed his first teaching practice at a large, co-educational, urban school. The lesson I observed was with a form four social studies class of seventeen students. Colin was very disappointed with the outcomes of the lesson which he described as a 'nightmare'. He felt that the students lacked concentration, that they were neither listening nor working. Inclined to blame himself and the absence of his associate, Colin was nevertheless philosophical, treating the experience as part of a learning curve.

In response to the June questionnaire Colin considered that the most important thing a teacher does is to inspire and motivate students to learn about the world around them. He identified co-operative learning, Ausubel advance planners and graphic organisers as being strategies learnt in College courses that would impact on his teaching. Classroom management was the area about which he had learnt most on section one. In describing the sort of teacher he wanted to be Colin stated; "hopefully I'll be friendly, honest, energetic, innovative, knowledgeable, eager etc ... The last thing I want to be is a teacher who sets exercises from a book and sits at their desk day dreaming".

Colin's second section was, in his own words, at a traditional, conservative, single sex boys' school. I wondered whether, given his desire to be a liberal teacher, he would find this school constricting.

To be honest, I was quite nervous before I went out there, a bit

anxious maybe, but once I got in there, after the first day my nerves just went away and from then on I had a great time. I really enjoyed it there - they were great associates, very friendly, very helpful - I just thought it was a really good school.

I asked Colin if he felt his ideas about teaching and learning had changed in any way as a result of his section teaching practice.

Not really to be honest. If anything they just **reinforced** my ideas even more. When I was there I saw quite a few bad teaching practices, the kind of things that I'm against ... like the teacher would give them a social studies textbook without any planning or preparation and just say, you know, colour in the map, locate these places, that kind of thing - they're just not learning anything from day to day and you can see they get very bored there as well.

So how did Colin ensure that students were engaged in the learning process?

When we were doing this Freirian debate, we were doing like the welfare state and there were a few there who had a great idea of what a welfare state was and there were other kids who just had no idea and once we started the debate on 'do you think it's a really good idea/do you think it's a bad idea?' on the outer extremes you could see the ones who had no idea were learning off each other, just by listening and you could see the concept coming across to them, I thought they were obviously learning that. Through role plays they learnt a lot as well. We did a lot of role



plays concerned with racism in the third form special needs class, things like the holocaust, treatment of Indians, that sort of thing, and they really got into that.

In the seventh form history class Colin adopted a much more traditional note-taking approach in order to get through the content required by his associate. He also found that his third form maths teaching was very 'traditional' but acknowledged that the resulting minimal workload was "a bit of a relief really".

Of all the students Colin probably had the least difficulty integrating College theory with practice. Learning theory gave him a structure for his lessons and an understanding of different learning styles meant that he was very aware of the need to vary the learning activities, to cater also for those students who "aren't into role plays and things like that". Towards the end of his second interview Colin articulated his understanding of the connection between teaching and learning. "I think I'm a real fan of kids finding out information for themselves and we just kind of **guide** them in that general direction and just help them out to find out stuff for themselves ... you guide them in the general direction and then you facilitate them to learn". He returned to his concern over some of the teaching practices he had observed on section. Talking of seventh form history and his associate's practice of simply leaving the students to it, he noted: "one of the very first things we learnt at psychology was that you obviously remember things far more if you understand them before you actually write them down and like they weren't even understanding what they were reading so it was falling over at stage one

hurdle basically ...” Of form five history he noted; “she would just give them activities to do out of the book ... and I wasn’t too sure that they were actually learning there either ... I’m actually quite sure of that too because I got to mark the reference test and some of them just bombed basically. They were doing the activities but I don’t think they were reinforcing it whatsoever.

Colin’s conceptions of teaching and learning were clearly reinforced and brought into much sharper focus by his College and section experiences. His initial ideas about the sort of teacher he wanted to be were fairly general and focussed much more on the affective than the cognitive domain. The significance of the teacher as a ‘good person’ to whom the students could relate was paramount. By the second interview Colin was focussing much more on the students and how they were learning; he in fact made little reference to the relationship between teacher and students and was one of the only student teachers who did not seem to be having difficulty over the ‘fine line’. Colin’s ability to integrate College ideas into his own teaching practice may well be the result of his own predisposition to facilitation of learning rather than transmission of information. He was also able to cope with what he perceived to be negative role modelling by identifying those aspects of his associates’ performance that he did **not** wish to emulate and articulating how he would prefer to operate instead. He displayed a good understanding of how students were or were not learning and retained his enthusiasm and desire to be a ‘liberal’ teacher.

## Andrea

Andrea attended a single sex girls' high school and university in the same city majoring in history and art history. She then took a year off to work and travel before returning to complete an honours degree in history followed by her teacher training year at the College of Education.

I asked Andrea what learning meant to her. She responded with some very clear understandings of **how** she learnt. "I think it's quite important for me anyway that there's a lot of discussion involved in learning. I think people learn more from talking about things and interacting with other people than from just working on their own". Andrea also advocated "learning by actually doing something rather than just being told about it". She described an experience at university where the students ran seminars.

That was good - good experience and you **learn a lot from people's feedback** because our seminars - we had to present a seminar on our research projects before we handed them in and getting people's feedback - you got lots of other ideas that you hadn't thought of - and just the **actual physical thing of doing a seminar**, like having to be prepared, that's quite good for you. Trying to set something out in a **structured way** so people will understand it, that was good.

In thinking back to learning situations at school which worked well for her, Andrea recalled her fifth form history classes.

My fifth form history teacher, I found I learnt well in her classes. They were always very **structured**. She had set patterns of when she would do something ... but she always initiated a lot of class **discussion** and tried to relate things to what was happening in the world today and really tried to foster an interest in us, in taking an interest in what was going on around us. She was interested in our **opinions**. Everything was presented quite clearly and logically and personally I find that's the sort of person I like. I like things to be set out quite clearly.

I asked Andrea what she thought teaching was. "Helping students learn I suppose ... I think teaching in schools is **guiding** people, directing in terms of directing discussions and showing people how to do things, ways of doing things ... I don't see a teacher's role as being really authoritarian and telling students this is the way something is done". Her image of the teacher in a classroom was a very visual one.

I visualise a teacher interacting with the students but still sort of standing apart from them. Like if someone walked into the room they should be able to recognise who the teacher is because you still need to maintain an element of control. I see a teacher walking round - not just standing at the front of the class but coming around and talking to individual students and just making sure that they're on the right track and helping them as much as possible really.



When I asked Andrea what sort of a teacher she wanted to be her response was; "quite firm but not horrible, not really strict. I don't really think you can go in and be their friend, that wouldn't really work but I want them to like me ... I would like to be approachable so that they would feel comfortable coming and asking me ..."

Andrea's first teaching practice section was in a large, co-educational, urban school. I observed her teaching a period of seventh form history to a fluctuating number of students. She was trying to teach in the interactive, discussion based manner that she favoured but was hampered by the newness of her relationship with the group, her relative inexperience in questioning, the fact that many students had been absent from the previous lesson and the fact that she had been given no long term plan and was therefore working from lesson to lesson. Andrea was rather disappointed with the outcomes of the class. She felt the amount of chat and inattention was a problem but was uncertain as to how 'strict' to be especially with seventh formers. She realised that she could relate well one to one but was struggling in the whole group situation.

In her responses to the questionnaire prior to second teaching practice, Andrea identified the most important thing that she had learnt from her first section. "That classroom management needs to be effective in order that lessons can run as planned. Trying to be friends with the students doesn't help - it is good to be approachable and friendly but it is important to maintain a **distance** from the students". Andrea resolved to be more 'up front' with her ground rules for

acceptable/unacceptable behaviour in the future. Also in the questionnaire Andrea reflected on new learning acquired in College courses which had had an impact on her ideas about teaching and learning. "I have learnt that students learn through a variety of methods and in many different ways. This has made me realise that teachers need to be versatile and varied in their approach to teaching, according to the different needs of their students".

Andrea completed her second teaching practice at a private all boys' school teaching art history, history, English and social studies. She found the school "more structured and organised" than her first section school and experienced "a better sense of community there". She also "liked the fact that it was a single sex school too ... I went to an all girls' school and I've always thought that single sex education was better for me".

Within the artificial constraints of section (five week duration, someone else's classroom, status etc.) Andrea felt that she was beginning to make progress towards being the sort of teacher she wanted to be. She was firmer to begin with though still struggling to find the management balance that would work for her. "Like I want to be friendly but not on the same level of friendliness that they are. I'm not quite sure how to do that without **crossing the line** if you know what I mean". She did find with one class "that I had to be - I sort of had to do what my associate wanted me to - he thought that I wasn't strict enough **so I found myself not being myself**, because I know that he was very strict ... I think that they (the students) could see that, I think the students could sense it because I'd been teaching without him in the room and when he came along I was different and I think they knew. I don't think it worked".

Andrea went on to talk further about the influence of associate teachers. One associate was "really nice and helpful and very positive ... so I didn't really feel constrained - I wasn't concerned that she would think that what I was doing was wrong because she was quite encouraging. On the whole my associates were really helpful but I did feel, when they weren't in the room, that I was much better. When they were in the room one of my worries was that my content wasn't good enough, my knowledge, and the other one was that they might think that I'm not being strict enough or I'm too strict or something".

I asked Andrea to talk about the relationship between what she had learnt in College and classroom practice.

I think that, at college there's all these theories. We're getting told do this, do this, do this, but I don't think they all work in the classroom, I really don't. Lots of them do and lots of them are good but they are really hard to put into place because you are so constrained by the curriculum and things like students being away on field trips and everything. The teachers I saw were just so busy just trying to get everything - **all the knowledge by the end of the year**. They didn't have time - sometimes you just have to write notes on the board and do those sorts of things because group work and that sort of thing are good but they do take a lot longer. Although I agree that just writing it down all the time is useless, **it's quite hard to get away from that traditional type of teaching.**



In reflecting on changes in her ideas about teaching and learning, Andrea commented:

If we're talking about the beginning of the year, like before I started College, then I think my ideas have changed completely because I wasn't aware of the fact that people do learn differently. I hadn't even thought about mixed abilities - there was so much I hadn't really even considered. All I really know was how I'd been taught. Now I can look back and I can see which teachers of mine were good teachers and why and start thinking about why a bit more rather than just knowing they were good teachers and not thinking about it at all.

This growing awareness of how students learn was reflected in Andrea's observations of student learning in her classes. I asked her how did she know when students had actually learnt something? "Probably when they surprised me I think". She described taking students about once a week to the art gallery and feeling that they learnt a lot because they had no textbooks, couldn't look up the answers and had to "work it out for themselves". I also asked Andrea to describe for me the relationship, as she saw it, between teaching and learning.

As a teacher, I think that learning for me should be the most important thing that I'm concerned with ... why be a teacher if your students don't learn anything? I think a teacher can only go so far - if the students aren't willing to learn then they're not going to learn and at the end of that year they're going to move on and



whether they keep learning or not is up to them. So if you can instil in the students a **desire to learn**, and they can see the point in it, the relevance, I think that if I could do that as a teacher I would feel that I had accomplished something. If they could see the importance of learning.

Although Andrea felt that her ideas about teaching and learning had “changed completely”, I believe they had not so much changed as been illuminated by understandings gained in college. Her new understanding about the way students learn enabled her to put her own learning and teaching experiences into a meaningful context. In essence, however, her initial concept of the teacher as guide and facilitator remained intact and the ways of learning that worked best for her - discussion, practical activity and provision of clear structure - were ways which she continued to build into her teaching programmes. At the same time there was an increasing acknowledgement that the reality of time constraints, examination prescriptions and pressures of work meant that desirable ways of teaching and learning might well have to be sacrificed at certain times in the name of expediency.

Andrea's ideas about the sort of relationship she wanted to establish with her classes also remained relatively intact despite some minor modification after section one. She continued to affirm the importance of being firm but approachable; relating well to the students while retaining a certain distance (avoiding 'crossing the line'). The strength with which this conception was held is evidenced by her reaction to the presence of an associate whose views on classroom management diverged from her own. Andrea was very aware

that in meeting the expectations of this associate she was, in fact, operating in a way that was at odds with her own conceptions. Her "strategic compliance" (Lacey, 1997, p. 72) resulted in what she perceived to be an artificial and uncomfortable situation.

### **Brian**

Following an extended period of full and part time study culminating in a Masters degree, Brian had worked in a variety of areas including education research, third world development and pressure group political activity. His decision to undertake teacher training was influenced by his previous involvement in aspects of education and the satisfaction he had gained in tutoring his nephews and nieces.

Brian expressed a very holistic conception of learning. "Learning to me is an on-going activity - it really is a **search for knowledge** about what life is about ... understanding the wider principles first has an appeal that it might not have to other people so I found myself very much in an interdisciplinary mode ... delving into various fields and trying to **make the connections**".

Teaching he saw as:

**Imparting knowledge ... teaching children to think critically, to be able to make connection between things, to try and see the wider picture ... I think a lot of people learn information - they learn**

how to do clever things in certain disciplines but I think there is a big lack of understanding of things that we should understand better ... I would encourage children to look at various aspects ... to bring a balanced view but I think certainly some critical thinking and being able to have a wide perspective and try and make connections and draw threads together.

I asked Brian to describe the sort of teacher he wanted to be. He acknowledged the fact that some of his ideals might have to be compromised in the current education climate but went on to state that "because I have a love of learning and seeking knowledge, I would like to impart that as much as I can". He wanted to engage students' interest and also "encourage children to use information as effectively as they can. At least be aware of the real value of it and how important it is".

Brian's first teaching practice was at a co-educational, rural school where he was teaching history, social studies and English. The lesson I observed was a sixth form history class on the Origins of World War One which involved the screening of a video interspersed with additional explanation from Brian and opportunities for the students to ask questions of clarification. In reflecting on the lesson Brian felt satisfied that he had got through the content but was concerned at his failure to get the participation he had hoped for. In his efforts to "swot the lesson up" he wondered if, in fact, he had presented it in the best possible way. He acknowledged that the mode of presentation which he had been accustomed to as a student was no longer appropriate for today's pupils.

In the mid-year questionnaire Brian described the most important thing a teacher does as to “instil the motivation for learning and knowledge; encourage a critical, logical approach and a wide range of interests; reinforce the value of certain ideals eg. truth, freedom, democracy, sense of justice”. His definition of learning mirrored that in the first interview but included the phrase “being able to distinguish information from wisdom”. Asked to identify anything he had learnt in college that had had a real impact on his ideas about teaching and learning, Brian stated; “appreciation of the importance of facilitating student centered learning. The need to have a repertoire of activities that interest and activate students. I see this as a constant challenge - always trying for improvement”. Ideally Brian wanted to be a teacher “that students really appreciate in the sense they feel that their own learning is really progressing”.

Brian completed his second teaching practice in an urban, single sex boys' school again teaching history, social studies and English. He enjoyed the supportive, friendly atmosphere of the school but found the content workload “pretty demanding - I was up to 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning quite a bit ...”. I asked Brian if he was able to teach in the way that he wanted to on section. He found that motivating the senior classes was quite a problem and that management was a big issue with junior classes.

Like in the sixth form, doing the Origins of World War One, I suppose I think back to the days when we just sat in class and got dictated notes and now they've got a glossy textbook which apparently they get easily bored with and I gave them two films

which the school apparently didn't know about and I dug up some new material and applied that, but I was still frustrated. This is probably because I haven't got sharp enough techniques yet to get their attention and keep it going along. I mean sometimes I did but sometimes I felt dissatisfied.

Brian also found that identifying the teaching role that best suited his style and approach was not easy on section.

You're developing your own style of teaching and at the same time when you're working with associates, you're fitting into their pattern of expectations about how the teaching should be done. So if you have four associates, in a way, and you're teaching at different levels, you feel you're almost taking on a **diverse collection of roles** to some extent, in teaching ... when you're on teaching practice, that is not necessarily easy to cope with. Especially when you're cramming in content and trying to present it effectively.

Like Andrea he was aware that the way he was being expected to operate with some classes was not necessarily the right way for him, but the nature of teaching practice and the expectations of associates meant that it was difficult to resolve "inner conflicts and inner tensions ... I mean there were one or two days when I felt - like I'd been hard on that fourth form class - and I thought was I becoming a **real teacher** or was this something that I wanted to do regularly and sort of behave like that day by day. Would I get satisfaction out of



it?"

I asked Brian what he found out about how students learn. He responded in terms of the different teacher management models operating at different levels with very little reference to student learning. Later in the interview he reflected; "I think the best learning comes when you're self motivated I feel, so you're seeking knowledge and you're really driven to that and you're committed for your own internal motivation. What I'm seeing in the classrooms is, your discipline systems and management systems to sort of coerce students to learn ...". He also wondered whether the sheer amount of information generated by the information explosion was actually turning students off.

As an older student Brian faced a difficult task, a fact which he acknowledged. His initial conceptions of teaching and learning were, as for many of the students, both general and idealistic. He was particularly interested in the process of learning but worked initially from the premise that the learner would be a self motivated and willing participant. Although transmission of knowledge was an important part of his conception of teaching, it went well beyond that to the empowerment of students to critically analyse, sift information, make links between concepts and disciplines. What seemed to be happening in the classroom however was that Brian's concern with his own acquisition of content was generating a lot of information delivery on his part, less in the way of information processing for the students. Added to this was the realisation that many school students are not self motivated learners and that therefore his very valid conceptions of learning were going to have to be

modified for the classroom.

Throughout his second interview Brian continued to articulate ideas and concerns from the teacher's perspective. He had not, at that point, made the shift away from a focus on his own role and performance to a focus on the learner. Bearing in mind that all the students interviewed went through this same process of initial self absorption, it would be reasonable to assume that Brian would begin to focus more on the students as learners following his third teaching practice.

### Gayle

Gayle went to a co-educational secondary school and then on to Otago University where she started out doing commerce and law and ended up specialising in social science subjects, specifically history. Her initial experience at university was "a disaster - I hated it. I mean I didn't know what a bibliography was until my second year and I wondered why I never did very well in essays in the first year. The concept of a bibliography had not been taught to me or introduced to me". Later, when Gayle finally got "the first decent mark I'd had at varsity and it was like 'Oh, goodness, I can actually do it' and from there it gave me the confidence".

For Gayle learning was when "you've clicked on to something". The best way for her to learn involved discussion and

the rebounding of ideas ... because you can sit there and start off with an idea but the more you listen to other people you think that actually my

idea is not that watertight in the first place and you have to start thinking about other people's ideas and start incorporating them. If you don't have that discussion where else are you going to get that sort of questioning ... you need other people's interpretations and perceptions and challenges.

To learn effectively Gayle needed to discuss and to do - "I hate just sitting in the class - it's better to actually do something". She also felt strongly that "quite a lot of learning happens at home, that we're like the secondary level of learning. That the foundations for learning are set at home and we've got to build on that or work with that".

I asked Gayle what she thought teaching was. "Well for me it's the information, you're giving the skills to the kids to be able to learn because you can't expect them to remember the little bits of information. You're **aiding** them in developing their learning patterns ... it took me ages to realise that you don't have to remember all the information - that is not the point of a lot of learning". When it came to describing the things that an effective teacher did Gayle responded; "value you as a person for starters and have the confidence in you - **to have a good relationship with that teacher is more important than the information they are giving you**". As a teacher herself Gayle wanted to be respected, "to be fun but make it quite clear that they're not going to have me on".

Gayle's first teaching practice section was at a co-educational school on the fringes of the city. I watched her teach a form four social studies class. She was



reasonably pleased with the way the class went though concerned about her lack of confidence with content and her consequent inability to sustain an up front teaching segment for any duration. She felt slightly constrained by her associate's patterns of operating, expressing a desire to do more experiential, problem based activities. Gayle made a point of circulating frequently around the room and touching base with all students several times over.

When I asked in the mid-year questionnaire 'what is the most important thing a teacher does?', Gayle responded "aid the students' sense of self worth and mutual respect and from that, teaching students how to learn". The words she chose to express her concept of learning were 'experiences, enjoyment, participation and empowerment'. From college she had learnt that it was "OK not to have any tangible results at the end of a lesson (ie notes)" as this would allow more flexibility and variety of activities. Her most important learning experience from first section was discovering that "I did actually like teenagers".

Gayle's second section was completed at a single sex girls' school where she taught social studies, clothing technology, geography and history. She was somewhat taken aback to discover that she was the only student teacher at the school but after an initial period of dislocation she settled down and "quite enjoyed it towards the end". However "in terms of having moved on in teaching, I haven't really - my associates just didn't help, or weren't in a position to help".

Like a number of the other students Gayle struggled to find the right balance in

her relationship with the students. "I don't know if it's such a good thing but I want them to like me, but in reality they are not all going to like you so I am going to have to deal with that. I want them to respect me as well. But also I like laughing with them and getting on with them because I find them really fun".

Different associates impacted on Gayle in different ways.

I had one associate who was so relaxed - I thought he was actually really good - he wrote that I had a really good sense of humour and I hadn't thought about that but it was actually being in his class, that we obviously felt really comfortable and we used to - I mean if I was unsure I would just ask him in the middle of the class - and so I was a lot more relaxed in that class because he was a relaxed sort of person ... whereas another one was a lot more - she didn't really smile or anything - I was a lot more guarded in that class.

Gayle consolidated her ideas about the way she wanted to teach and how students learn. She continued to spend very little time at the front of the classroom, developing student centered activities. "I don't actually think they are going to learn if they just copy what I have on the board, or dictate or whatever. **They have to have a part in it to learn**". She learnt, however, that not everything goes according to plan.

Some things didn't work - the kids just didn't click on to what I

wanted them to do and I thought I did all this preparation for it and they said they really enjoyed the activity - it was our trip down town - but they just missed the point of it. It was looking for evidence of different cultures in our community. And then they had to analyse the information. What I gave them was a little paragraph with a couple of examples to set them on the right track - I gave them three questions that they knew how to go through and analyse. One group had food shops and they went down town, like I was meaning like the Kebab House and the Noodles, you know something ethnic - they went down town and wrote down every single food shop they went past. I felt a bit disappointed that they'd missed the point ...

Believing that an important part of learning lay in challenging students' perceptions Gayle tried to do this.

I tried with the fourth formers but it was hard, really hard going, being in a middle-class, white school talking about 'are we a multicultural society?' and they just wouldn't sit next to the Indian girl in the class. It was actually awful. I didn't know what to do - I couldn't make them sit next to her, except I started allocating groups.

In analysing the way her students were learning Gayle began to question her own approach. "I sometimes wonder if it's too student directed ... I just suddenly wondered if I was catering for everybody - some of them might enjoy

taking down notes or having more structure". The relative absence of feedback from associates continued to concern her and a final comment about her perception of the relationship between teaching and learning helps to explain why.

I mean you can't learn - there's a limit to how much you can learn on your own, contrary to what my brother thinks; "I'm going to learn everything for myself, that's why I'm not going to university". I mean he does learn things but there's no outside input, he doesn't get challenged and never reflects on what he's doing. He's just sort of caught up in himself. So I think you need those two.

Gayle's conception of an effective teacher was very closely linked to her own personal ways of learning. For her, the relationship between teacher and learner was paramount; once a positive, supportive relationship was established the learning could take place. Learning then had to be active, involving discussion and practical activity. Perhaps because of the relatively laissez faire approach of her section two associates, Gayle got the opportunity to teach in her 'own way' more than some of the other students. There is considerable evidence that, despite the view expressed in the last quotation, she was reflecting on, analysing and, to a certain extent, challenging her own ideas about teaching and learning. While those ideas did not change in any substantial way, they were being questioned for possible modification further down the track, particularly in relation to the balance of student centered and

teacher directed learning activity. Certainly, Gayle's second interview illustrated clearly that her focus had moved considerably from herself as teacher to her students as learners.

### **Diane**

Diane attended a private girls' college for her primary years and then spent four years at a state secondary girls' school before completing her last year of secondary schooling at a private boys' school which was just beginning to accept girls in the senior school. She then completed a degree in history and classics. She had very clear memories of her own schooling. The primary experience was a positive one for her.

We used to do things like a century book, which is like going through the centuries from the dark ages, you know just way back when they had huts and things like that and you moved through and you would like draw pictures and things like that that were related to the things you were writing down. We did that from form one and form two so we just moved through and got up to the twentieth century which was really good so you sort of **had that history** ... also we learnt quite well, we used to learn pieces from the Bible and do, like learn poems and things each week, so you had to learn like a couple of pieces from the Bible and after four weeks you would have to repeat back to the teacher the whole thing ... I mean we learnt things like the Jabberwocky and we learnt all sorts of verses from the Bible and we had a Bible and

would do that one week and a poem the next week and while the other children were going up to narrate to the teacher you'd be writing the poem out and drawing pictures, so it was both - **learning like that was really good.**

Secondary school however was very different. Diane was conscious of the attitude of the girls and the teachers and felt that her achievements and those of some other girls went unacknowledged; "I don't think they could reach their potential in that sort of atmosphere".

Diane saw learning as **"something that you don't already know, something new ... developing skills and developing knowledge that you already have ... I think you can learn things off other people, not necessarily knowledge but learning how to relate to people in work environments"**. For her, reading, watching a video, listening to stories, were good ways of learning. "I'm not really a person who, when you're studying, writes lots and lots of notes. If I read something I usually remember it...".

Teaching was **"providing what the children need to know and developing on the knowledge they already have in an interesting manner**. Not just sitting there and badgering them with facts and everything, and also having them participating ... ". Diane felt it was important that students learnt to work on their own as well as in groups because "you can't rely on others - it has to be you who is pushing yourself all the time ...". For Diane a good teacher needed to be "very organised and know their material ... innovative ... and with exams and things at the end of the year it really is their job to ensure that the children

have the best background at being able to pass those exams ... ". She went on to describe a teacher who had made a real impact on her.

It was actually my sixth form classics teacher - she was just the most amazing teacher. It was a balance - we'd have class discussion and we would have group work and where you could shine out individually, but it was sort of different things like at the end of the year the class split into two and we did an archeological dig so one group had to make artifacts and bury them and the other group had to dig them up ... and we did a pictorial thing where you had to take photos of different things ... and you had to go and find columns or mosaics or sculptures and find out the history of them ... and she kept the class on their toes the whole time ... she didn't put anyone down - everyone was made to feel important which was really good.

Diane described the sort of teacher she would like to be. "I think it's important that you set out the ground rules from the very beginning so they know what level you're going to deal with them at and how you're going to deal with them ... and I think communication is important as well because if you don't communicate with them properly, they won't feel free to come and talk to you and ask questions ...". At this point she was a little apprehensive about her first teaching practice at an all boys' school with three male associates. "I think that females often treat things differently than males would, especially in the classroom".

When I saw Diane on section she was taking a form four social studies class. She was confident and controlled with the group and in discussion afterwards agreed that she was enjoying the teaching and would be sorry to leave. She expressed her need to “keep on top” of the students, wanting them to know that she was in charge. She had some concerns about students knowing where she worked part time and the effect that might have on their perception of her as teacher. She felt that the boys were not used to thinking for themselves and she was making an effort to encourage them to do this, seeing it as a useful skill for later life.

Diane did not complete a mid-year questionnaire so my next research contact with her was in early October (somewhat later than with the other students in the research group). She had completed her second teaching practice at an urban, co-educational, multicultural school, teaching social studies and history. Her first reaction to my inquiries about section was; “I found it difficult because of the school and particularly because of the attitude of the students ... I got to see a different side of schooling, perhaps children who don’t want to learn or who don’t really want to be there and you have to stimulate them in a different kind of way”. Diane decided that her expectations and standards of behaviour had to be more flexible than previously. “One boy is on medication because he throws chairs through windows and if he tells you to f... off you really have to ignore it and I would have stamped down on it. But that’s understanding the individual needs of each child. But you shouldn’t have to put up with it - I said to everyone that I won’t have that kind of language I will send them to another class”. One of the conclusions Diane came to was that “you can have a



mutual respect but you don't cross over the line".

Diane talked about the way her students learnt. "They liked to have things like a **book full of notes**, they didn't just like talking about or having a discussion about something. They liked to have some sort of solid thing there that they can go back and look at and they can see right, we did this, this and this and yet they may not necessarily understand exactly what they did so I actually found that they learnt better by actually doing things". She went on to describe wall posters students had made connected with the Olympic games; "it was something that was their work, something that they had done and something they could be proud of ...".

I asked Diane whether she felt her ideas about teaching and learning had changed at all since the beginning of the year. "I think they have stayed the same to a certain extent, I don't think they've changed that dramatically. I mean as I said to you, **it was quite a lot based on how I was taught ...**". Asked to describe what she thought the connection was between teaching and learning Diane responded; "I think teaching sort of works alongside learning so you can sort of find a more direct path".

Diane's path through the college year was somewhat different from that of the other students. As a result of illness she missed a substantial proportion of the college-based course. She managed, however, to complete assignments and teaching practice sections. Her initial ideas about teaching and learning were an interesting mix of influences drawn from primary and secondary experiences. Clearly these continued to impact on her teaching style; one of

the projects undertaken with a social studies group on her second section bears a real resemblance to a primary school learning activity described by Diane in her first interview and quoted at the beginning of this section. There is little evidence of any real impact from college courses in the development of her conceptions. Of all the students, Diane probably had the most clearly formed initial ideas about classroom management. These served her well during her first section but were challenged by the nature of the students she was working with on her second teaching practice. Where other students were 'firming up' their management strategies, Diane was learning to be more flexible though still within certain clearly defined boundaries.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

As this research project has developed I have several times questioned the wisdom of focusing on conceptions of learning and conceptions of teaching. The lines of inquiry would have been somewhat simpler had I focussed only on conceptions of teaching which tend to be the primary concern of teachers in training. However I believe there are important links between the nature of the individual as a learner and that same person's conceptualisation of the role of teacher, a connection also suggested by Hollingsworth (1988).

It appears that a novice's self image as a teacher may be strongly related to the novice's self image as a learner. That is, in constructing images of teachers, novices may extrapolate (albeit unconsciously) from their own experiences as learners, in essence assuming that their pupils will possess learning styles, aptitudes, interests and problems similar to their own.

I wish therefore, to begin this chapter by citing the categories of conceptions of teaching and learning identified in recent research and relating my findings to these established categories. My findings in relation to conceptions of teaching are more thoroughly explored and, I believe, more significant.

## Conceptions of learning

In 1979, Saljo interviewed adult students to discover what they understood by learning. He then classified their responses into five different categories.

1. The increase of knowledge
2. Memorising
3. Acquisition of facts, procedures etc., which can be retained and/or utilised in practice
4. Abstraction of meaning
5. An interpretative process aimed at the understanding of reality

The recent research of Marton, Dall'Alba and Beaty (1993), has identified a sixth conception of learning and has resulted in a slight change in the labels used to refer to the conceptions. Their categories are:

1. Increasing one's knowledge
2. Memorising and reproducing
3. Applying
4. Understanding
5. Seeing something in a different way
6. Changing as a person

Biggs (1991) identified three broad categories of conceptions of learning.

1. Quantitative: learning is a matter of how much is learned
2. Institutional: learning has to be taught and evaluated in an institution of learning
3. Qualitative: learning involves personal meaning - a way of understanding experience

Common to all the research on conceptions of learning is the distinction between conceptions which are quantitative (Saljo and Marton et al, conceptions 1, 2 and 3) and those which are qualitative (conceptions 4, 5 and 6). The categories are also hierarchical in that "students who conceive of learning as understanding reality are also able to see it as increasing their knowledge. Each higher conception implies all the rest beneath it" (Ramsden, 1992, p.27).

At the beginning of the year I asked the students in my research group what learning meant for them and how they went about learning. Their views about learning were then probed again, explicitly in the questionnaire and more generally in the second interview. Although the research setting was an academic one I did not limit responses to the strictly academic but sought a holistic view of learning. I tried to use the students' own words, rather than their actions, to identify their conceptions. Some students struggled to explain what learning meant for them but were able to describe very clearly what best facilitated their learning. Some students described learning as an active process (something they did) while others described it as a passive process (something that was done to them).

What I would like to do now is to try and make explicit for the reader, the processes I have gone through in order to arrive at a set of categories. I believe that the

process is as important as the outcome; I also acknowledge that this is but one interpretation of the data and I would not yet invest the categories with any sense of finality.

The categorisation into quantitative and qualitative conceptions of learning was easily accomplished (there was no evidence that I could identify to support Biggs' 'institutional' category; students interpreted learning in a broad sense). I ended up with a short list of 'quantitative' conceptions and a long list of 'qualitative' conceptions. The quantitative list included such things as 'knowing more, new knowledge, new skills, memorising and doing different things'. When I had an initial look at the list of qualitative conceptions, an immediate distinction emerged. I tentatively labelled the first set of conceptions 'cognitive'. The cognitive conceptions included such things as 'modifying ideas, questioning one's conceptions, distilling different points of view, developing skills to think for yourself, making connections, distinguishing information from wisdom, critically analysing, understanding concepts and ideas ...'. These were all processes that the learner applied to information or knowledge he or she had acquired in order to transform that knowledge and make it his/her own. There remained a number of conceptions which did not fit under the cognitive label. I initially labelled them 'affective' for want of a better term. In fact they tend to be conceptions which described the impact of learning on a person's life and included such things as 'broadening horizons, lifelong, reaching one's potential and empowerment'.

I then had another look at the data to see if they could be broken down further and arrived at the following categories.

1. Increasing knowledge
2. Memorising and reproducing
3. Acquiring skills
4. Understanding
5. Seeing something in a different way
6. Changing as a person

'Increasing knowledge' is well exemplified in Fiona's quote "learning for me is when you know more, you take on all this information ... it's just an acquisition of knowledge". This could well have been the problem in Fiona's first year geology paper where she expended a lot of energy in accumulating the information without necessarily translating that information into her own understanding.

Diane's description of her primary school learning - "we used to learn pieces from the Bible and do, like learn poems and things each week ... it was a very good way of learning and actually a lot of people that I know, they don't necessarily have to write notes, because they've read it and they've listened to it and they can remember it" - is an excellent example of 'memorising and reproducing'.

Interestingly, 'acquiring skills' was seen to be an important part of learning but, in interview, it tended to crop up in the 'teacher's' perspective of learning rather than in the 'learner's' perspective of learning. In her definition of teaching, Gayle stated; "well for me it's the information, you're giving the skills to the kids to be able to learn because you can't expect them to remember the little bits of information. You are aiding them in developing their learning patterns". The 'acquiring skills' category acts as a bridge between the quantitative and qualitative groupings.



Students in the research group clearly saw the acquisition of skills as the means by which information could be transformed into understanding. So Brian wants to "teach children to think critically, to be able to make connections between things ...". Gayle describes it succinctly as giving them (the pupils) "tools".

'Understanding' and 'Seeing something in a different way' are also closely linked. For many of these students understanding comes through the process of reconciling different points of view, written or oral. "I find reading is quite important, and a lot of different aspects of a topic, a lot of different authors and people who have just got a different opinion and writing those notes down and then just clarifying them and taking each part and you thinking what's relevant and what it all means ... the more you listen to other people you think that actually my idea is not that watertight in the first place and you have to start thinking about other people's ideas and start incorporating them". One outcome of the process of understanding may well be seeing something in a different way; "you'd do your reading and you'd have your idea of what you'd just learnt but it wasn't until you went to the group with ten other people and they all said what they got out of it, and it was more than what you had so you actually went out with more. You need other people's interpretations and perceptions and challenges".

The final category, 'changing as a person', is elusive but, I believe, valid. There is a sense, in some of the interviews, of the impact that learning has on the individual, a sense that the whole is bigger than the sum of the parts. For some students there is an intention to bring about change through learning. For others, the process of changing as a person comes as a surprise. Fiona expresses something of this and I quote at length to communicate the full sense of what she is saying.



I've learnt that you have to think 'why am I doing this?' and what makes you that way. Only really since I've come to College this year, like when you said to us think about the kind of teaching style you would like to have. For the first time you have to think about what you're capable of and what you're not capable of. Whereas at varsity I was just "oh yeah I got a 'c'" and that was it really and all you would get is some little comment going where you could have put this comma or you could have done that, whereas this is more - you are really thinking about things. You are thinking about how you are as a person and if you are not right in yourself, then you have got to have it sussed. And I'm thinking a lot more, like with the museum - for the first time I went there with my eyes open and that's really only happened in the past year or so - it's like you've got a brain - use it. And like I've been through varsity and all this so this is the weird thing. I mean I've got a degree hanging on the wall.

Being challenged, having to think for oneself and seeing things in a different way seem to culminate in a questioning of one's very being.

I have suggested that categories one and two are closely linked, as are categories four and five, with category three providing a link between the two. Category six would seem to be a culmination of the previous five categories and is certainly linked to the fact that most of the students identified learning as being far more than an academic, classroom procedure. Rather it was seen as being a lifelong search or journey, a way of empowering people and helping them to reach their potential.

## Conceptions of Teaching

Considerable work has been done in recent years to identify the conceptions of teaching held by tertiary educators. Conceptions of teaching held by secondary teachers and teacher trainees have also been investigated but the use of phenomenography as a research method tends to have been restricted to the tertiary level. Table one outlines the categories of conceptions of teaching arrived at by four different researchers or groups of researchers in recent years.

**Table One: Classifications of Conceptions of Teaching**

<b>Martin &amp; Balla (1991)</b>	<b>Samuelowitz &amp; Bain (1992)</b>	<b>Pratt (1992)</b>	<b>Kember &amp; Gow (1994)</b>
Relating teaching to learning.	Teaching as supporting student learning.	Social reform conception. - seeking a better society.	Learning facilitation
Encouraging active learning - experiential - discussion - motivational	Teaching as an activity aimed at changing students' conceptions or understanding of the world.  Teaching as facilitating understanding.	Nurturing conception - facilitating, personal agency.  Developmental conception - cultivating the intellect.	[Kember and Gow talk of 'orientations to teaching' rather than 'conceptions of teaching.]
Presenting information - content organisation - delivery	Teaching as transmission of knowledge and attitudes to knowledge within the framework of an academic discipline.  Teaching as imparting information.	Apprenticeship conception - modelling ways of being.  Engineering conception - delivering content.	Knowledge transmission

My research identifies yet another combination of categories. They are:

- \* Teacher as Provider/Manager
- \* Teacher as Facilitator/Motivator
- \* Teacher as Nurturer/Role Model

For reasons I will discuss in the next chapter, I am reluctant to rank these categories; rather I see their relationship as complementary (Figure 1). However before investigating this relationship further, I would like to consider each category as it emerged from the data.

#### Teacher as Nurturer/Role Model

The first interviews, which occurred after the students had spent four weeks in college and just before their first teaching practice, showed an overwhelming concern with the image of 'self as teacher'. This was scarcely surprising. What did surprise me however was the predominance of the affective domain in the students' thinking about their role as teacher. Teachers who had impressed from their own school days were memorable largely because of the positive relationship they had established with their students.

I think my best teachers at high school, particularly at fifth, sixth and seventh form - I actually got on really well with them and could almost say they were friends, like they were just really good people ...  
(Colin).

Just like they had a presence, they knew who they were, they knew themselves. They were friendly. To me it was just the way they were, like I always wanted to be like them (Fiona).

(An effective teacher would) value you as a person for starters and have the confidence in you - to have a good relationship with that teacher is more important than the information they are giving you (Gayle).

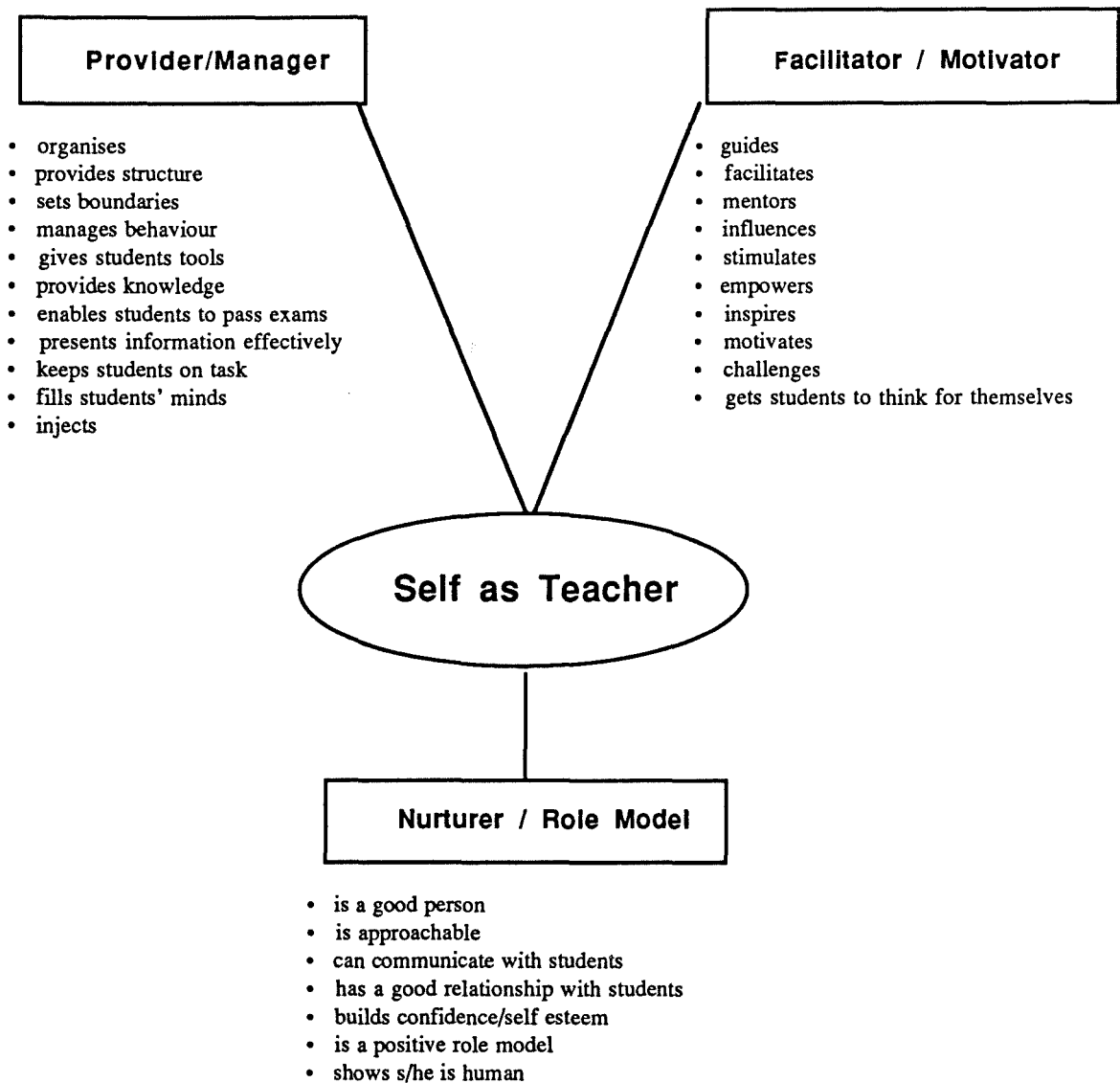
The students were eager to create a similar sort of learning environment in which they related well to their pupils.

I think if you're a good person then you've got a definite advantage when you come into a field like teaching which is basically, I reckon, a person occupation for sure (Colin).

... I want them to like me obviously ... I would like to be approachable so that they would feel comfortable coming and asking me or they wouldn't feel silly if they didn't understand something. I would like not to judge them, not to make them feel dumb or something (Andrea).

And I think communication is important as well because if you don't communicate with them (the pupils) properly, they won't feel free to come to you and ask questions - they'll just walk out of your class and then you won't have achieved anything (Diane).

**Figure 1 : Conceptions of Teaching**



There was an awareness in these first interviews that the establishment of a good relationship would have to be balanced against the need to manage the class and ensure on task behaviour. However there was also what Weinstein (1988) refers to as "a tendency towards egocentric thinking that contributes towards unrealistic optimism". Following the first and second teaching practices most students acknowledged that they had been somewhat idealistic in their views about relating to pupils and there was a general 'firming up' in attitudes towards classroom management. However the significance invested in the affective domain did not diminish.

I think from being on section that it's quite important that you have a good rapport with the students. I think if they don't like you they're not going to learn because they don't want to (Evan).

... if you can get in there and get the kids to respond to you because of your manner, then you're home and hosed ... you've got to be approachable, you've got to be able to relate to them and have an understanding (Fiona).

Well I don't think you can move much further unless you've got that - you've got to set up some sort of relationship for the learning to follow (Gayle).

What was an issue for most students was not whether they had to choose between one or the other (positive relationship or effective classroom



management) but how to find a workable balance between the two, since only then could learning begin to occur. The number of students who independently talked about 'crossing the line' or the 'fine line' was revealing. There is no doubt in my mind that these students saw role modelling and nurturing as a significant aspect of their role as teachers. For some it was the pre-eminent role without which learning was unlikely to occur. For others it was acknowledged as an important factor likely to enhance learning.

### Teacher as Provider/Manager

Some students emphasised this role in the first interview, even before they had begun their first teaching practice. Diane felt that teaching was "providing what the children need to know" and that "the children need to know where you are at and where you stand and then you can form your relationship and mesh after that". Reflecting on the sort of teacher he wanted to be, Evan stated; "I think you have to make sure that the third and fourth form are learning and doing things correctly and being told what to do and they follow that ...". Fiona saw the role of teacher as filling students' minds in the right way and making sure that the conditions were appropriate for learning to occur; "I like a bit of strictness without being too strict because I don't like seeing people get away with things when others are trying to learn". Other students initially placed less emphasis on the role of provider/manager. "I don't see a teacher's role as being really authoritarian and telling students this is the way something is done" (Andrea). "I see no problem with like, kids chatting ... I'm going to be pretty open in that sense ... I'm going to have very few rules in my class ... I'm going to be pretty open minded in terms of discussion and things like that because I think what kids actually learn off each

other is also pretty awesome as well..." (Colin).

By the end of their second section all students had recognised and acknowledged the need to provide boundaries for behaviour and structure for learning. In general, however, the students retained their initial conceptions with just some minor modification or firming up. Kagan (1992) has stated that "the reality of the classroom rarely conforms to novices' expectations or images ... quickly disillusioned and possessing inadequate procedural knowledge, novice teachers tend to grow increasingly authoritarian and custodial. Obsessed with class control, novices may also begin to plan instruction designed not to promote learning but to discourage misbehaviour". Logical and predictable as this sounds, it does not tend to reflect the experience of this (admittedly small) group of students. Their reaction to challenging management situations was to learn from the experience, to clarify their own expectations and boundaries without abandoning their basic conception of the role of teacher. As a result of her second section, Diane, who had possessed quite clear and firm views on classroom management, acknowledged the need to be more **flexible** in her expectations. Brian, who had talked little about management in his first interview, saw it as a major issue by the time of the second interview. I endeavoured to conform to the management expectations of his associate, however, he felt that he was losing sight of the sort of teacher he wanted to be; "was this something that I wanted to do regularly and sort of behave like that day by day?".

What did cause problems and interfere with the conceptions of some students was being, as they saw it, forced into the role of 'provider' when they preferred to see themselves in the role of 'facilitator'. "The teachers I saw were just so busy just



trying to get everything - all the knowledge - by the end of the year. They didn't have time - sometimes you just have to write notes on the board and do those sort of things because group work and that sort of thing are good but they do take a lot longer" (Andrea). The students who saw this as a problem tended to acknowledge the reality of the situation and compromise in their teaching strategies. While they tended to place the 'blame' for this compromise at the feet of their associates ("that was like partly forced on me by my associate"), I suspect that there was a growing acknowledgement, implicit in Andrea's statement above, that this was, to a considerable extent, the way they were going to have to teach, at least at senior level.

#### Teacher as Facilitator/Motivator

In the June questionnaire, filled out by six of the seven students after they had completed one teaching practice, I asked; 'in your opinion, what is the most important thing a teacher does?'. The responses were:

- \*motivate students/encourage enthusiasm for learning (4)
- \*encourage critical/independent thinking (2)
- \*facilitate learning (2)
- \*reinforce value of certain ideals
- \*help develop student sense of self worth and mutual respect
- \*teach students how to learn

It is clear from these responses that the roles of motivator and facilitator feature prominently in the students' conceptions of teaching. Whereas the 'provider/manager' category implies a hierarchical relationship between teacher

and pupil, the facilitator/motivator category seems to, in theory, at least, imply a more horizontal relationship.

I think teaching sort of works alongside learning so you can sort of find a more direct path (Diane).

I think I'm a real fan of kids finding out information for themselves and we just kind of guide them in that general direction and just help them out to find out stuff for themselves rather than just getting up the front and just telling them (Colin).

I think teaching in schools is guiding people ... I would like to guide a discussion so that the important points came up and I knew the students were given the information, but still letting the discussion go it's own way (Andrea).

I think a teacher can only go so far - if the students aren't willing to learn then they're not going to learn and at the end of the year they're going to move on and whether they keep learning or not is up to them. So if you can instil in the students a desire to learn ... (Andrea).

I would never have been in front of the kids for more than five minutes - I don't actually like that - I don't like being the focus of attention for too long. It's a confidence thing but I don't actually think they are going to learn if they just copy what I have on the board, or dictate or whatever. They have to have a part in it to learn (Gayle).

There are challenges and tensions involved in this role as some of the students recognised. As a result of teaching practice experience, Brian felt he had to play a part in motivating the students and yet, "I think the best learning comes when you're self motivated, so you're seeking knowledge and you're really driven to that and you're committed for your own internal motivation". Andrea was conscious that, although she wanted to be a guide and facilitator, she nevertheless had an obligation to ensure that students covered the required material and that this could be difficult if she did not sometimes assume the role of 'provider'. Gayle, who early on expressed a strong preference for a very facilitative and experiential approach, began to question whether her approach was too student directed; "if I did that cards thing again, I'd have more input. I felt a bit redundant at times and didn't feel I was aware of exactly what they were doing ...". Fiona, on the other hand, came to a realisation that "they're responsible for their learning", even though "I have to make it learnable, right?".

I have chosen to identify three categories of conceptions of teaching. I acknowledge that, within each category there are further distinctions, especially between provider and manager, facilitator and motivator. However I have deliberately tried not to create too many categories for reasons which I will discuss in the next section.

### **Relationship between teaching and learning**

Trigwell and Prosser (1996) have identified three ways in which university science lecturers describe the relationship between teaching and learning; "by focussing on

only one side of the relationship (eg teaching), or on both sides in an unrelated way or on both sides in a related way. In the first case they are seeing only one part of the whole relationship, in the second, the two parts (teaching and learning independently), and in the third, seeing teaching and learning as two parts of the same whole".

I think this is a useful way to categorise the conceptions of the links between teaching and learning. Some of the students in the research group came into college with ideas about teaching and learning which, if not necessarily very clearly articulated, suggested that they already fell into the third category. Others were focussed much more on the teaching than on the learning component. At the end of seven months most students were seeing the two as inextricably connected and some, whose focus had initially been teacher centered, were linking their concepts of teaching much more to student learning. There remained a distinction, however, between those who considered teaching to be the dominant 'partner' in the relationship and those who saw it as a true, equal partnership.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Students in the Secondary Programme at the Christchurch College of Education who have come from secondary school to university and straight into college bring with them recent and vivid memories of what learning means for them and how teachers have impacted on that learning. Students in their thirties and forties bring rich and valuable life and career experience and possibly recent experience of being a learner in an academic institution. All students, either implicitly or explicitly, have an understanding of themselves as learners and an image of the sort of teacher they would like to be. The stronger and more explicit this image, the less likely it is to be amenable to change. This is the challenge for teacher educators and associate teachers.

When I first interviewed the students in my research group and listened to their ideas about teaching and learning, I felt obliged to probe further to see if I could draw out other ideas or layers of meaning. In fact I discovered that the initial conceptions expressed were very much at the core of the students' understanding and that further probing tended only to result in repetition or slight expansion. I think this is significant. These students knew what learning was for them and how it could best be achieved. They clearly understood the sort of teaching that best facilitated their learning. There was no uncertainty or confusion about this at all.

As the students enter teacher training, two significant things are going to happen. Their conceptions of learning are going to be challenged possibly by college courses and most certainly by the pupils they encounter on teaching practice. They will find that the ways of learning that work best for them do not necessarily apply to all learners and that not all learners share their motivation or enthusiasm for learning. Secondly the students will have their conceptions of teaching challenged by being placed on the other side of the fence. With the exception of the students who already have teaching experience, trainee teachers' conceptions of teaching are formulated through their experience as learners not as teachers. There is therefore a great deal to come to terms with in a short time and the process is made even more complex by virtue of the fact that student teachers are both 'students' and 'teachers', expected at various times in the year to assume one role or the other and sometimes both at the same time!

In general the students in the research group moved from an egocentric focus on their role and identity as a teacher to a greater awareness of the needs of their pupils as learners. This is paralleled by a diminishing preoccupation with the affective domain and a developing fluency in the concepts of the cognitive domain. Currently the college reinforces this progression by placing its initial Professional Studies course emphasis on personal presentation, lesson planning and classroom management, all of which have a teacher focus. An initial focus on the pupil as learner rather than the student as teacher, could conceivably offer an alternative route into the craft of teaching.

My work with this group of students confirms the existence, noted in the introduction, of an 'intuitive screen/latent culture/teaching schema/lens/filter ...' through which the students interpret their college courses and their teaching practice experiences. Bullough (1991) states that "content and experiences that tend to confirm the schema and related conceptions of self as teacher, are accepted, whereas those that do not are rejected" while Knowles (1992, p.133) maintains that "what was taken from the university, however, were those viewpoints and orientations to practice in the classroom that were congruent with previously held images of teachers' work and that provided validation and reinforcement of their positions". What does not seem to be common in the literature is an acknowledgement that some students may enter their pre-service training with conceptions of teaching and learning that already align closely with the principles and practices espoused by teacher education institutions.

Working through the interviews it becomes clear that the students are involved in an on-going, internal debate arising from new experiences and challenges. For many there is then a process of adjustment or modification to their existing schema. You can see students struggling to accommodate understandings outside their previous experience. For others the teacher education experience serves to confirm and develop the ideas about teaching and learning already held. My interpretation of the data from this research project suggests that the change does not go much beyond minor modification. Students are prepared to compromise to a certain extent but not at the expense of abandoning their conceptions. Diane's approach to classroom management, although modified by her second semester experience, is not substantially altered.



Colin's desire to be a 'liberal' teacher is certainly challenged by his first teaching experience but the challenge serves to reinforce rather than undermine.

It is clear that individual students' conceptions of teaching and learning do not fall simply into one category. Each student expressed conceptions which spanned at least four of the six categories of conceptions of learning identified by Marton et al. (1993) and all of the categories of conceptions of teaching arising out of this research project. However, I believe the data indicate a pattern. In terms of their conceptions of learning, students initially tended to favour either a quantitative or a qualitative grouping of categories. Fiona, for example, tended to see learning very much as an increase in knowledge achieved through memorising, reproducing and the application of skills. Gayle, on the other hand, tended to see learning as the process of changing one's understanding through exposure to alternative ideas and opinions. The conceptions of learning held by each student are a reflection of the way they go about their own learning and are likely to determine whether their approach to learning will be a surface or a deep one. Concepts of learning are clearly central to students' formulations of their conceptions of teaching.

The careful study and categorisation of these students' conceptions of learning throws light on a conflict of interests which clearly emerged in the interviews. The conflict arises when students are confronted with pupils who are apparently conditioned to learn in a predominantly quantitative way and with associates who, because of pressure of time and curriculum demands, sacrifice qualitative for quantitative approaches. A vicious circle is created in which the pressures on classroom teachers produce a style of teaching which pupils accept

because it delivers the goods and requires little cognitive processing on their part. When student teachers arrive in classrooms, primed with new ideas from College and enthusiastic about making a difference, they are confronted, more often than not, with associates and pupils who, for their own good reasons, demand a certain way of teaching, one which undoubtedly encourages a surface approach to learning. Because the student teachers are short term guests in someone else's 'territory', because they are conscious of being under scrutiny for assessment purposes, they tend to adopt an approach of "strategic compliance ... in which the individual complies with the authority figure's definition of the situation and the constraints of the situation but retains private reservations about them" (Lacey, 1977, p.72). "The simplest, easiest route for students is to take the role of an apprentice and reduce classroom complexities by default - by modelling the co-operating teacher's approach. This reduces the complexity but tends to limit knowledge growth to a surface level" (Hollingsworth, 1989). This was clearly an approach several students felt obliged to adopt both in terms of the way they organised for learning to occur and the way they went about managing their classes.

Working on the basis of the tripartite categorisation of conceptions of teaching - provider/manager, facilitator/motivator,/nurturer/role model - it would seem that, while most students at one time or another, express conceptions which encompass all three, there is a tendency for each student to favour one or two only. It is likely that the categories favoured are a reflection of the student's strengths. As Calderhead and Robson (1991) observe, "students sometimes linked these positive images (of good teaching) to particular personality attributes of their own and this, in the students' minds, seemed to reinforce the

appropriateness of the model - it was the kind of teacher they could be and could readily see themselves becoming". Correspondingly, as Weinstein (1989) points out; "it would appear that, in the absence of a clear public consensus about good teaching, students are free to construct 'mini-theories' about teaching that devalue attributes that they do not themselves possess".

A number of the students in the research group expressed a very strong preference for the nurturer/role model category in their initial interviews. The importance of that conception did not diminish as the year progressed but it was tempered by a growing awareness that the role of teacher was broader than they initially perceived it to be. Most of the students struggled to achieve a balance between the three categories and that struggle is clearly articulated in their interviews.

In introducing the categories of conceptions of teaching that arose out of the data collected for this research project, I suggested that they could be seen as complimentary rather than hierarchical. In listening to and observing the students, it seems to me that an effective teacher needs to encompass all of these categories in order to have any hope of creating an effective learning environment. In describing their own teacher role models, the students talked of teachers who organised and structured material, who were firm but fair, who encouraged students to express their own ideas, who generated enthusiasm for learning and who developed students' confidence and self esteem. I suspect that most student teachers retain their predisposition for a certain grouping of conceptions but that a significant part of the teacher education process involves them coming to terms with aspects of the role that may be less immediately

appealing or accessible.

This in turn raises the issue of personality, individual preference and the assumption of a teacher 'role'. A number of the students interviewed expressed disquiet about being forced into a role which they felt was not natural or appropriate for them ("I found myself not being myself"). This is a common problem during teaching practice sections where students' and associate teachers' conceptions of the role of teacher may clash. Hollingsworth (1989) suggests that for pre-programme ideas about teaching and learning to change, it seems helpful for there to be a 'disequibration' set up by differences between the students' own beliefs and those of the associate teacher. "The study challenges the commonsense notion that pre-service teachers should be placed with teachers with whom they agree and that co-operating teachers should be chosen who are model teachers according to program philosophy". My data suggests that such a situation, while it may result in temporary and public acquiescence, in fact leads only to private resentment and a greater reinforcement of the student's own beliefs. More effective, perhaps, is a process by which the student 'disequilibrates' him or herself as a result of reflection on practice. Several of the students in the research group modified their conceptions of teaching and learning as a result of this process.

The idea of the **role** of teacher was one that the students returned to again and again. For most of the research group there was little sense, initially, of playing a role, adopting a teaching 'persona'. As the year progressed there was an increasing realisation that the person and the role were not necessarily identical and that it was possible and, in fact necessary, to divorce the two.

Students also began to grasp the fact that teaching involved the integration of a number of 'roles' as exemplified in the categories of conceptions. It was this realisation that helped students to come to grips with modifying their conceptions and enabled them to strengthen their managerial role.

The extent to which college courses impacted on students' conceptions of teaching and learning appeared to vary from individual to individual. All students were aware of learning new ideas and concepts in college but the extent to which they were accepted or applied, varied. Where college philosophy aligned with the students' previously formulated conceptions of teaching and learning, there was little problem. Where college ideas clashed with student conceptions or with school practice, there was a tendency either to publicly dismiss college teaching as too 'theoretical', or to assume a veneer of compliance, or to use associate expectations as an excuse for teaching in a 'traditional' way. Students were frequently caught between the requirements of their college tutors, the requirements of their teaching practice associates and their own conceptions of teaching. It requires a particularly strong and capable student to resolve satisfactorily these conflicting demands.

Given the condensed nature of secondary teacher training in the Division C course and the range of new learning experiences to which the students are exposed, it would seem that, currently, contact with college ceases at a time when students are most in need of support. There are strong arguments to support greater continuity between pre-service and in-service teacher education.

Writing of ways in which research into pre-service teacher education has informed changes to teacher education courses, Northfield (1992) identifies five 'propositions' which form the basis for considering new initiatives. These are:

- \*the prospective teacher has changing needs and priorities which must be considered in planning and delivering the program
- \*the transition from learner to teacher is difficult to achieve and is greatly facilitated by having prospective teachers work in a collegial environment
- \*the student teacher is a learner who is actively constructing views of learning and teaching based on personal experiences and strongly shaped by perceptions held before beginning the program
- \*the program should model the teaching learning approaches being advocated
- \*student teachers should see the pre-service program as a worthwhile experience but only the first stage of a career long professional development

The findings of this research project confirm these propositions as providing an excellent basis for pre-service teacher education and for on-going research into conceptual change and teacher education.

## CHAPTER SIX

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### Recommendations

One of the most consistent recommendations in the literature is that student teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning should be made explicit at the very beginning of teacher education courses. Many research findings suggest that students' initial conceptions are poorly formulated or inappropriate and that the first step towards altering these conceptions is to acknowledge them. My research suggests not so much that conceptions are poorly formulated or inappropriate but that students hold a range of different conceptions and that there would be benefit to both students and lecturers in making these conceptions explicit. A number of the participants in the research project spoke of the value of having to articulate their ideas about teaching and learning. Students need to understand where they are coming from in terms of the origins and development of their ideas about teaching and learning and I believe they need to have those ideas **valued** in their own right. To do otherwise is to negate a lifetime of classroom experience and to undermine the very basis of a student's image of self as teacher.

This process would legitimise student prior experience; it would also identify for lecturers the range of individual needs amongst the student cohort. Within



this relatively homogeneous group of seven students there was a considerable range of ideas about, and approaches to, learning and teaching. For truly effective learning to occur, a greater emphasis on individual programmes may well be of value.

Once individual conceptions of teaching and learning have been made explicit, I believe another powerful tool would be the sharing of these conceptions amongst students. For a number of the students in my research group, listening to and debating with others, having their ideas challenged, was an important way of learning. A recognition of the different conceptions of teaching and learning held by their peers would, I believe, facilitate the process of personal growth and change. I believe the process of sharing conceptions would also speed the transition from a focus on university learning and teaching to a focus on secondary learning and teaching.

Students involved in this research project were initially preoccupied with their role as teacher. Their own performance was a principal concern during section one and it was not until section two that their focus began to move to the needs of their pupils as learners. The very public nature of the teaching process, combined with the initial in-college course emphasis on personal presentation and classroom management, reinforced this preoccupation. Presentation and discussion of the model presented in Figure 1 (Chapter 4) could result in a demystification of the concept of role, enabling students to situate their own conceptions of teaching while recognising the existence and significance of others.

Another possible approach could be to place the learner at the centre of the initial course focus. If students were to begin to understand earlier how their pupils learn and how teaching and learning interconnect, they may be better equipped to integrate course theory with teaching practice. They may, in fact, be in a position to generate the theory themselves as a result of their research. This is likely to lead to a deep rather than a surface approach to learning for the college students, an approach which they may then be more likely to facilitate in their own classrooms.

Although students in this research project were not asked specifically about the structure of their college year, one student indicated that there would be value in an ongoing connection with a school on a weekly basis. The feeling was expressed that long periods in college with no classroom contact did little to develop links between theory and practice. It seems that there is a need for the Secondary Programme to look critically at the current structure of the college year with its four in-college teaching blocks and three discrete teaching practice sections. Currently students are asked to enter three different workplaces in the course of ten months. In each new environment they are required to come to grips with new associate teachers, pupils and institutional processes and procedures while all the time being observed and assessed. In my mind, this, at its best, encourages a superficial approach to the process of understanding about teaching and learning and, at its worst, places students under an intolerable strain. Previous research (Robertson and Roberts, 1995) suggests that two extended sections could offer students a greater opportunity to develop an understanding of their pupils as learners and to follow through with teaching strategies, management and assessment practices. The current project indicates

that a structure permitting regular, ongoing contact with pupils in schools would be of real value in linking theory and practice.

This project revealed that pre-existing beliefs and prior experiences were central to a student's concept of self as teacher and that learning experiences in the course of the teacher training year tended to result in modification to existing ideas rather than conceptual change. It is highly likely that, faced with administrative, managerial and curriculum pressures, beginning teachers will fall back on an approach to teaching informed by prior experience. Several students in the research group who had initially indicated that they favoured a deep approach to learning later acknowledged that time constraints and the expectations of associate teachers had resulted in their adopting teaching methods designed to promote a surface approach to learning in their pupils. It is of utmost importance therefore that beginning teachers are supported in the ongoing process of changing, modifying or building on, their conceptions of teaching and learning and this can only be done through organised programmes of professional development and peer support. One could argue that such learning is likely to be more meaningful because it is situated within the context of regular classroom practice. Greater involvement by Colleges of Education in post pre-service teacher education is therefore vital for positive change in education.

It is of real concern to me that the often conflicting demands of college and associate teachers result in additional stresses for students. The participants in this research project clearly articulated this problem. Improved liaison between college and school is one way in which this tension is being addressed.

However I believe there are fundamental problems in perception arising from the fact that the college is an institution designed specifically for the training of student teachers while schools are institutions designed for a different purpose. It is, in fact, inappropriate to expect teachers of secondary school pupils to think like teacher educators. It is also highly problematic to expect students to enter an already established classroom environment (three times over), with its well embedded loyalties, power structures and methods of operating, and institute a model of teaching very different from that of the associate teacher. In other words, I am suggesting that our current *modus operandi* may well encourage students to either toe the college line and risk associate displeasure or to comply with associate expectations and disappoint college tutors. One possible way of creating stronger links between associate teachers and pre-service teacher education programmes may be to involve teachers in classroom research related to teaching practice. In their role as observers, associate teachers are in a strong position to engage in research which could provide valuable feedback to students and to college programmes. There is considerable potential for the development of a paper in the College's Master of Teaching and Learning which addresses these links.

I believe this current research project indicates a dilemma which goes beyond the relationship between college and schools. There was certainly a perception amongst the students in my research group that associate (and their) approaches to teaching were constrained by the content expectations of the curriculum, more particularly at senior level. The suggestion is that the amount of content knowledge required, combined with the time constraints placed on teachers, promote a surface approach to teaching and learning. This

has real implications for the New Zealand Curriculum Framework and for the quality of learning in our schools.

## **Conclusion**

This current research project grew out of a smaller scale study undertaken in 1995 as part of a paper investigating teaching and learning in higher education. The 1995 study looked at the conceptions of teaching and learning held by a small group of students and lecturers in the Secondary Programme at the Christchurch College of Education. It became clear, from that study, that a lot more in-depth work remained to be done and thus the decision was made for the purposes of this thesis, to focus specifically on student conceptions. The 1995 paper also introduced me to a new research methodology.

Phenomenography offered a way of investigating people's ideas (in this case about teaching and learning) in depth and in a manner that valued their own personal expression of those ideas.

A fascinating aspect of the last two year's work, for me, has been the discovery that the more I find out the more there is to find out! Although the 1996 study has revealed far more than the previous one, I have been very aware, in the writing up of this thesis, of the gaps; the literature I didn't find, or am still finding, the questions I didn't ask, the lack of rigour in my data analysis. For me there are two outcomes to the work done this year. One, expressed in the research findings, discussion and recommendations of this paper, sits in the

public arena. The other, more personal, involves a steep learning curve about the process of being involved in research. Despite the many frustrations, caused more often than not by time constraints, it has been an exciting and rewarding process.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION OVERVIEW

#### 1996 TIMETABLE PLANNER (Secondary)

Note : The College Year is broken into 4 In-College BLOCKS and 3 In-School Teaching Practice SECTIONS.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
Jan 22 - 26				Students Begin	Enrol't & Reg'n	
29 - 2	Block 1 begins					
Feb 5 - 9		Waitangi Day				
12 - 16						
19 - 23						First interview
26 - 1					Block 1 ends	
Mar 4 - 8						
11 - 15			Section 1			Teaching practice observations
18 - 22						
25 - 29						
Apr 1 - 5						
8 - 12			Vacation			
15 - 19	Block 2 begins					
22 - 26				ANZAC Day		
29 - 3						
May 6 - 10						
13 - 17					Block 2 ends	
20 - 24	Block 3 begins					
27 - 31						
Jun 3 - 7	Queens Birthday					
10 - 14						Questionnaires distributed and returned
17 - 21					Block 3 ends	
24 - 28						
Jul 1 - 5			Vacation			
18 - 12						
15 - 19						
22 - 26						
29 - 2			Section 2			
Aug 5 - 9						
12 - 16						
19 - 23	Block 4 begins					
26 - 30						Second interview
Sept 2 - 6			Profile Writing/Principals Visit			
9 - 13						
16 - 20			Vacation			
23 - 27						
Oct 30 - 4						
7 - 11						
14 - 18					Block 4 ends	
21 - 25						
28 - 1	Labour Day		Section 3			
Nov 4 - 8						
11 - 15					Show Day	
18 - 22			Special Programmes Week			
25 - 29					Graduation	
Dec 2 - 6						Shared lunch



## APPENDIX B: STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviews were semi-structured using the following questions as starting points from which further probing could occur.

### Interview One

- \*firstly tell me a bit of background about yourself
- \*what does learning mean for you?
- \*how do you go about learning?
- \*can you give me some examples of how you go about learning in particular situations or settings eg. at school/university/informally ...
- \*explain to me what you think teaching is
- \*what does a teacher do?
- \*how does a teacher help **you** learn? (give some specific examples)
- \*right now, what sort of a teacher do you want to be and how do you believe you are going to achieve this?

### Interview Two

- \*tell me first what school you were at on section 2, what subjects you taught and which classes you had
- \*tell me a little bit about how section was for you - highlights and lowlights
- \*prior to section you had an idea of the way you wanted to teach, the sort of teacher you wanted to be. Were you able to teach the way you wanted to on section? If yes, what helped you operate this way and if no, in what ways was your teaching approach different from what you had in mind and what were the causes of this?
- \*how did your associate teachers affect your approach to teaching?
- \*can you identify the most important things you learnt on section; how do these things connect with what you have learnt in college?
- \*what did you find out about how students learn?
- \*do you think your ideas about teaching and learning have changed since the beginning of the year; if your answer is yes, how have they changed and why?
- \*how would you describe the connection between teaching and learning?

## APPENDIX C: MID YEAR QUESTIONNAIRE

### CONCEPTIONS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING: RESEARCH PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROJECT JUNE 1996

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. In your opinion what is the most important thing a teacher does?
2. Write down three (or more) words or phrases that express what you think learning is (not how you learn)
3. Identify anything you have learnt in College so far this year which has had a real impact on your ideas about teaching and learning (if you can't think of anything, say so). How do you think this will show itself in your classroom teaching?
4. What are the most important things that you learnt from your first teaching section and how did you learn them?
5. How is this going to impact on your approach to section 2?
6. Describe the sort of teacher do you want to be?
7. What sorts of things have influenced your answer to the above?

## REFERENCES

- Baird, J. R., Fensham, P. J., Gunstone, R. F. and White, R. T. (1989) *Teaching and Learning Science in Schools*. Interim research report, Monash University.
- Biggs, J. B. (1991) Teaching: Design for Learning, *Research and Development in Higher Education*, Vol. 13, 11-26.
- Bruce, C. (1994) *Reflections on the Experience of the Phenomenographic Interview*. Paper presented at the 'Phenomenography: Philosophy and Practice' Conference, Brisbane.
- Bullough, R. V. (1991) Exploring Personal Teaching Metaphors in Preservice Teacher Education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 43-51.
- Bullough R. V. and Knowles, J. G. (1991) Teaching and Nurturing: Changing Conceptions of Self as Teacher in a case Study of Becoming a Teacher. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, Vol. 4. No. 2, 121-140.
- Calderhead, J. and Robson, M. (1991) Images of Teaching: Student Teachers' Early Conceptions of Classroom Practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. Vol. 7, No. 1, 1-8.
- Carter, K. (1990) *Teachers' Knowledge and Learning to Teach* in W. R. Houston (Ed.) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (pp. 291-310). Macmillan Publishing Company, New York.
- Christchurch College of Education (1996) *Secondary Programme Course Booklet*. Christchurch College of Education.
- Dahlgren, L. (1995) quoted in Gerber, R. and Bruce, C. *Qualitative Research - Phenomenography: Theory and Applications* (Videos 1 and 2). University of Queensland, Brisbane.
- Ely, M. et al. (1991) *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles within Circles*. Falmer Press, Philadelphia.
- Goodman, J. (1988) Constructing a Practical Philosophy of Teaching: A Study of Preservice Teachers' Professional Perspectives. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 121-137.

Gow, L. and Kember, D. (1993) Conceptions of Teaching and their Relationship to Student Learning. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 63, Part 1, 20-33.

Hollingsworth, S. (1989) Prior Beliefs and Cognitive Change in Learning to Teach. *American Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 26, No. 2, 160-189.

Johnston, S. (1989) *Understanding Professional Practice through the Identification of Images held by Student Teachers*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Adelaide, 28 November - 2 December.

Johnston, S. (1994) *Experience is the Best Teacher; Or Is It? An Analysis of the Role of Experience in Learning to Teach*. *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 199-208.

Kagan, D. M. (1992) Professional Growth Among Preservice and Beginning Teachers. *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 62, No. 2, 129-169.

Knowles, J. (1992) *Models for Understanding Preservice and Beginning Teachers' Biographies: Illustrations from Case Studies* in I. Goodson, *Studying Teachers' Lives*. Routledge, London.

Korthagen, F. A. J. (1988) *The Influence of Learning Orientations on the Development of Reflective Teaching*. In J. Calderhead (Ed.), *Teachers' Professional Learning*. Falmer, Philadelphia.

Lacey, C. (1977) *The Socialisation of Teachers*. Methuen and Co., London.

Lortie, D. C. (1975) *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*. University of Chicago Press.

McDermott et al. (1995) The Influence of Classroom Practica Experiences on Student Teachers' Thoughts About Teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 184-191.

Mahlis, M. and Maxson, M. (1995) Capturing Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about Schooling, Life and Childhood. *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 192-199.

Martin, E. and Balla, M. (1991) Conceptions of Teaching and Implications for Learning, *Research and Development in Higher Education*, Vol. 13, Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia.

- Marton, F. (1981) Phenomenography - Describing Conceptions of the World Around Us. *Instructional Science*, Vol. 10, 177-200.
- Marton, F., Dall'Alba, G. and Beaty, E. (1993) Conceptions of Learning, *International Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 19, Part 3, 277-300.
- Miller, S. and Fredericks, M. (1988) Uses of Metaphor: a qualitative case study. *Qualitative Case Studies in Education*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 263-272.
- Ministry of Education (1993) *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework Te Anga Marautanga o Aotearoa*. Learning Media, Wellington.
- Northfield, J. (1992) *Conceptual Change and Teacher Education: Impact of our Research on our Practice*. Paper presented at the Symposium Critical Issues in Conceptual Change at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 20 - 24.
- Olson, M. R. and Osborne, J. W. (1991) Learning to Teach: The First Year. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 331-343.
- Pintrich, P. R. (1990) *Implications of Psychological Research on Student Learning and College Teaching for Teacher Education* in W. R. Houston, *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York.
- Pramling, I. (1995) Phenomenography and Practice. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 135-148.
- Ramsden, P. (1992) *Learning to Teach in Higher Education*, Routledge, London and New York.
- Richardson, V. (1996) *The Role of Attitudes and Beliefs in Learning to Teach* in J. Sikula et al. (1996) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*. Simon and Schuster Macmillan, New York.
- Robertson, J. and Roberts, A. (1995) *Pre-service Teacher Education - A Question of Partnership*. Paper presented at the 25th annual conference of the Australian Teacher Education Association, Sydney
- Saljo, R. (1979) *Learning in the Learner's Perspective. I. Some Common Sense Conceptions*. Reports from the Department of Education, University of Goteborg, No. 76.
- Svensson, L. (1994) *Theoretical Foundations of Phenomenography*.

Phenomenography: Philosophy and Practice Conference, Brisbane.

Tabachnick, B. R. and Zeichner, K. M. (1984) *The Impact of the Student Teaching Experience on the Development of Teacher Perspectives. Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 35, No. 6, 28-36.

Trigwell, K. and Prosser, M. (1996) Changing Approaches to Teaching: a relational perspective. *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 21, No.3, 275-284.

Webb, G. (1996) Deconstructing Deep and Surface: towards a critique of phenomenography for staff developers. *Research and Development in Higher Education*, Vol. 19.

Weinstein, C. S. (1988) Preservice Teachers' Expectations about the First Year of Teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 31-40.

Weinstein, C. S. (1989) Teacher Education Students' Preconceptions of Teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 53-60.